

OBAMA'S  
TERROR 'NARRATIVE'  
MARK HEMINGWAY • THOMAS JOSCELYN

the weekly

# Standard

OCTOBER 3, 2016

\$5.99

## REVERSING DECLINE

The Example  
of Elizabethan England

BY THOMAS DONNELLY



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October 3, 2016 • Volume 22, Number 4



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# That's Not Funny

New York Times columnist Ross Douthat last week wrote an extremely controversial column about a topic that wouldn't seem so controversial on the face of it: late-night comedians. The peg was Donald Trump's recent appearance on *The Tonight Show*. Host Jimmy Fallon had a good-natured chat with the man and tousled Trump's famous hairdo. Liberals were aghast. They accused Fallon of helping humanize a man they view as a dangerous, racist xenophobe.

Late-night comic Samantha Bee, formerly of *The Daily Show* and who's graduated to her own show on another basic cable network, did a segment attacking Fallon. Douthat responded in his column by pointing out that Fallon is a cultural exception to an America where cultural elites are "acting as enforcers" for a radical liberal orthodoxy. Further, this cultural hegemony may actually be a problem for liberals because they have "dramatically raised expectations for just how far left our politics can move, while insulating many liberals from the harsh realities of political disagreement in a sprawling, 300-plus million person republic."

As if to prove Douthat's point,

the column provoked a social media tsunami of hostility. Conan O'Brien sidekick Andy Richter unleashed a torrent of furious tweets calling Douthat's column, among other things, a "tub of horses—t." And in a conference call

man as racist without cause in 2012.

It's pretty indisputable that rebellion against the mocking of politically correct scolds is a significant part of Trump's appeal. The likes of Bee and Richter and the rest of the late-night lefty comedian industrial complex will never admit it, but the more rabid their attempts to discredit Trump, the more they help him.

And make no mistake, Bee's job is helping a small audience of liberal elites to blur the line between self-righteousness and humor. Since Bee stopped appearing as an occasional correspondent on *The*



Samantha Bee goes after Jimmy Fallon.

with *New York Times* reporter Dave Itzkoff, Bee responded to Douthat's point, "It's so good to know that we're the problem and not racism."

Contra Bee, the fact that late-night television is full of so-called comedians launching into political rants is a big problem for political discourse in the era of Trump. For instance, it was quickly pointed out that in 2012 Richter was making jokes, if you'd call them that, about Mitt Romney being racist. It's the boy who cried "wolf." Even when there are legitimate objections to Trump, it's hard to take them seriously coming from people who slandered a good

*Daily Show*—which is struggling mightily since Jon Stewart's departure—THE SCRAPBOOK doesn't even know what nether region of basic cable her low-rated show appears on. Douthat's column may have been the most attention she's received, well, ever.

Fallon, on the other hand, is the highest-rated late-night comic, likely because he still views his job as offering some pleasant entertainment before bedtime. It's one of many regrettable aspects of Obama's America that liberals have even managed to upend the cultural consensus that a comedian's job is to be funny. ♦

## Unpardonable

A new movie on the subject from Oliver Stone and the imminent retirement of President Obama seem to have concentrated minds on the left: There is a burgeoning movement—confined, for the most part, to journalists—for Obama to pardon Edward Snowden, the fugitive national-security leaker now resident in Moscow.

Some of Snowden's public admir-

ers are predictable: functionaries from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as the editor of the *Nation*. None of these is surprising: THE SCRAPBOOK cannot remember the last time the ACLU might have recognized that there is something called the national interest; and the *Nation* has long had a weakness for Americans living in the protective shadow of the Kremlin. Their romantic view of Edward Snowden is

no doubt matched by Oliver Stone, the cinematic conspiracy theorist.

Which leads to an interesting difference of opinion on the subject at the *Washington Post*. One would expect that the *Post* might hold Snowden in high regard: It was the *Post*, after all, that published (in conjunction with Britain's *Guardian*) some of Snowden's stolen information about intelligence-gathering in the war on terror, and won a Pulitzer Prize for its trouble. To its credit,

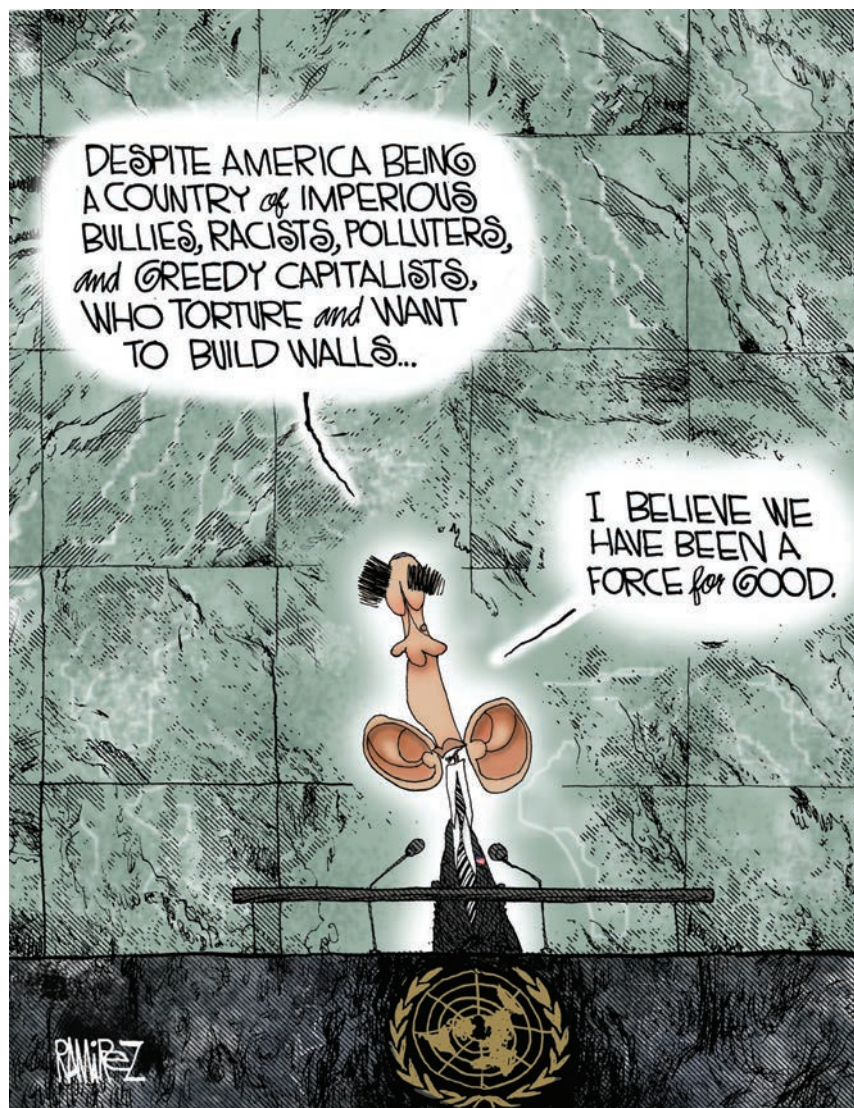
however, the *Post* sees the larger picture.

In a recent editorial opposing any presidential pardon for Snowden, the *Post* explains that Snowden did not just reveal privileged information that has led to a continuing debate about privacy and national security; he also leaked stolen information about “basically defensible” global operations, including spying on colleagues of Osama bin Laden and cooperative ventures with European allies. As the *Post* points out, “no specific harm . . . to any individual American was ever shown to have resulted from the NSA . . . program Mr. Snowden brought to light.” But “revelations about [NSA’s] international operations disrupted lawful intelligence-gathering, causing possibly ‘tremendous damage’ to national security, according to a unanimous, bipartisan report by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.”

In other words, the notion that Edward Snowden did nothing but perform a public service, for which he is being persecuted, is nonsense. And the fact that he sought refuge in Moscow, of all places, and does the bidding of the Putin regime affirms the wisdom of the Obama Justice Department in demanding that Snowden return home to answer (and adjudicate in court) the lawful charges against him.

Curiously, the logic and premise of this case seems to elude the *Post*’s media columnist, an ex-newspaper editor named Margaret Sullivan. She regards Snowden as a “whistleblower” whose violations of the law—not to mention the oath every public servant swears—are trivial in comparison to the story he delivered to the *Post* and the *Guardian*, yielding that Pulitzer Prize. It is an astonishing argument: Because Snowden imperiled national security by flouting the law, enlisting the press in the process, to benefit a cause Margaret Sullivan supports, he deserves to be excused from the legal consequences of his actions.

This is a caricature of the media’s tendency to identify the national interest with its own commercial prerogatives. It is also an elementary lesson in civics: The power of civil disobedience, from Henry David Thoreau



through Martin Luther King Jr., lies in the willingness to accept its consequences—and not demand that one citizen be exempt from the law because we happen to agree with him. ♦

## Twitter Tyranny

In *Federalist* 10, James Madison argued that the soon-to-be-ratified Constitution would serve as an effective bulwark against what John Adams, amongst others, called “the tyranny of the majority.” The Founders believed this danger arose chiefly through democratic government. But John Stuart Mill realized that a “social tyranny” of the majority could be

“more formidable than many kinds of political oppression.” As he wrote in *On Liberty*, “Protection, therefore, against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough: there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development, and, if possible, prevent the formation, of any individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own.”

THE SCRAPBOOK wonders if even



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Mill himself could have imagined the brave new world of twenty-first-century social media tyranny. Its latest victim? Not an easy-to-hate far-right racist, but mild-mannered University of Tennessee law professor Glenn Reynolds, better known, from his popular blog, as the indispensable Instapundit.

As Charlotte, N.C., became embroiled in violence this week after the death of a black man at the hands of a black police officer, Reynolds tweeted a WBTV report of "Protesters on I-277 stopping traffic and surrounding vehicles" with a three-word comment: "Run them down." The meaning of the wry remark seemed obvious. If you're stopped by angry mobs, the safest thing to do is drive away. "Whatever you think of the tastefulness of his suggestion regarding the protesters in Charlotte, the idea that he is seriously inciting any sort of actual or real threat is risible," as *Reason.com* editor in chief Nick Gillespie wrote. But Twitter seems intent on specializing in the risible; the social media site inactivated Reynolds's account until he deleted the tweet.

That didn't end things, of course. *USA Today* suspended his column for a month, and UT administrators scolded him for the "irresponsible use of his platform" and promised they are "investigating this matter." And so "one of the most interesting and thoughtful voices on the broadly defined right," as Gillespie summarizes Reynolds, "an incredibly sharp and serious person with an eye on the possibilities offered by technological and cultural innovation," might be hounded from the public square. Asked by THE SCRAPBOOK if, as he suggested online, he really plans to disappoint his fans and eventually leave Twitter, Reynolds replied, "As soon as this settles down."

And so Mill's call to arms is as relevant now as ever: "There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence: and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs, as protection against political despotism." ♦

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The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in March, fourth week in June, and third week in August) at 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, \$4.95. Back issues, \$4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Copyright 2016, Clarity Media Group. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of Clarity Media Group.



## The Clean-Plate Club

Towards the end of a recent lunch, I found myself ogling a friend's bowl of chicken pista korma. He was done, but there were still a few tender chunks of chicken left. It required enormous restraint on my part not to ask him, "Are you going to finish that?" And considering we were in a restaurant called The Bombay Club, I was tempted to say, "Think of all the starving children in India!" In short, I had become Sister Jean.

My grade school in New Jersey was run by Dominican nuns. One of them, Sister Jean, taught physical education, coached the boys' basketball team, and ran the annual spaghetti dinner. But during lunchtime, Sister Jean also patrolled the aisles of the cafeteria, trying to keep order and making sure we finished everything on our trays before letting us out for recess.

This was generally not a problem for me since I enjoyed the cafeteria food. Growing up in a Filipino household, most of my dinners involved rice. So the offerings at school were in their own way exotic. We're talking about open-faced roast-beef sandwiches with gravy, canned corn and green beans on the side, hoagies, meatball subs, and fish-filet sandwiches (affectionately known as rubber on a raft). Bring it on!

Except there were times when I just wasn't hungry. Every chew got slower, each morsel taking longer to get down. Meanwhile, looking out through the basement windows, I could see my classmates running around and screaming like maniacs. I wanted to be out there screaming with them, but it wasn't happening—not with Sister Jean inspecting trays and rattling milk cartons.

It was then that I decided to take drastic measures. I started stuffing leftovers into my jacket and pants pockets. Other students must have done the same. I know this because the cafete-

ria sometimes served us plastic cups of peanuts. And when you got outside, you'd be stepping on those very same nuts—they were scattered all over the place like shrapnel. Kids were actually throwing them at each other (no one seemed to suffer from peanut allergies). Still, I took things a bit further.

Every now and then, I'd conceal a half-eaten burger and forget about it. If it was a Friday, when I got home, I'd throw my jacket into the hamper. My mother would then find the burger, or pieces of it, after the wash. The worst was when I put potato salad into my coat pocket—my mother woke me the next morning, yelling while holding a machine-washed (and dried) glob of potato salad in her hand.

In any event, I now find myself emulating Sister Jean, demanding my own children finish their food before they're excused from the dinner table. The only difference is whatever they can't finish (after much pleading), I take upon myself to eat. I cannot tell you how many half-eaten sandwiches, partly bitten chicken nuggets, and smatterings of rice I've had from my kids' plates over the last few years.

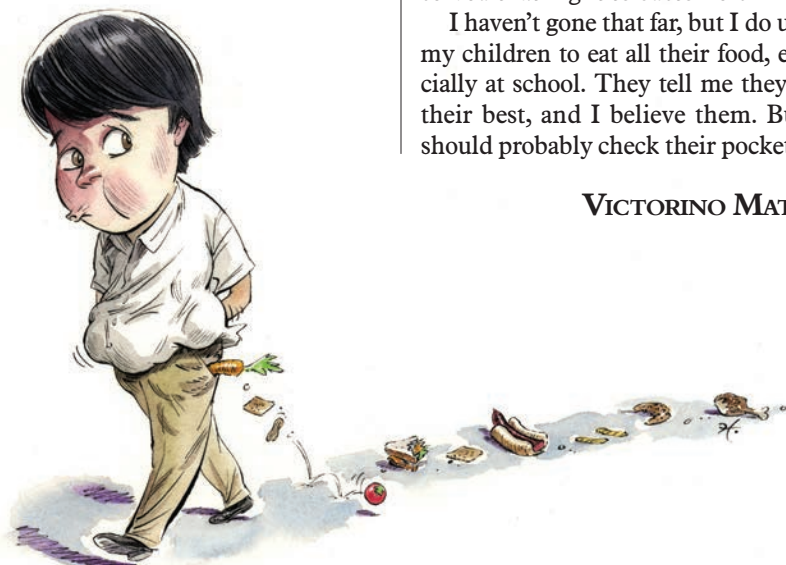
This habit has occasionally extended to include the food of other family members. When my mother-in-law asked me to throw away remnants of her "party potatoes"—a rich and delicious blend of mashed potatoes, cream cheese, and scallions—I found myself standing over a trash bin, pretending to throw it out but secretly eating what was left using the serving spoon. Think of all the starving children in . . . Connecticut?

Maybe it's because I'm bothered by the sky-high grocery bills. Maybe it's that mantra our parents repeated over and over: "Waste not, want not." Or maybe it's because I read a statistic about restaurants wasting 40 percent of prepared food. Speaking of which, the obsession with food conservation turns out to be a common trait in the restaurant industry.

"It has always been my habit when I arrive at a restaurant kitchen to check the garbage bin to see if anything usable has been discarded," writes Jacques Pépin in his memoir. He notes that his former pastry chef "took to hiding damaged pastries and breads in the trunk of her car, so she could take them home and dispose of them herself, away from my judgmental eyes." In Bill Buford's *Heat*, Mario Batali berates the author for tossing celery leaves into the garbage, which the chef then retrieved and served that night to customers.

I haven't gone that far, but I do urge my children to eat all their food, especially at school. They tell me they try their best, and I believe them. But I should probably check their pockets.

VICTORINO MATUS



# Obama's Terror 'Narrative'

Within a few hours on September 17, a pressure cooker bomb exploded in the Chelsea neighborhood in New York injuring 31 people, a man stabbed 10 people in a Minnesota mall, and bombs were found near the site of a Marine Corps charity race in New Jersey. The following Monday morning, White House press secretary Josh Earnest appeared on CNN and explained, "We are in a fight with ISIS—a narrative fight."

There was much guffawing at the suggestion that, to paraphrase *The Untouchables*, the Obama administration is bringing a narrative to a gun fight, much less the global war on terror. However, the old Washington saw that a gaffe is when you accidentally tell the truth certainly applies here. Americans who don't follow politics obsessively would likely be stunned to learn that this is an official White House talking point. At least five times in the last year, Earnest has publicly fretted that ISIS is advancing its "narrative."

And while liberals were once appalled by George W. Bush saying "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists," the Obama White House has taken his cowboy Manicheism a step further and explicitly applied it to all public criticism. On more than one occasion, Earnest has suggested that doubt about White House terror policies, such as the stubborn insistence on shutting down Guantánamo despite an alarming number of released detainees who have resumed their terror activities, "only serves to advance the narrative that ISIL is seeking to write."

It's true that in foreign policy, a narrative *does* matter, to some extent. On this point, the White House is in agreement with the terrorists. "The war of narratives has become even more important than the war of navies, napalm, and knives," observes the Alabama-born Omar al-Hammami of the al Qaeda affiliate al Shabaab. However, there's a crucial difference between the narrative being put out by Islamic terror groups and the narrative being put out by the White House. When terrorists say they want to kill us, their actions give us ample reason to believe them.

The White House keeps lying to us. In recent weeks, we've learned that the White House made \$1.7 billion in payments to Iran in cash and a \$400 million payment specifically contingent on the release of hostages. (The administration

unconvincingly disputed the characterization that this was a ransom.) The White House further claimed the cash payments were necessary because it was strictly adhering to sanctions policy and America had no banking relations with Iran. But after the reporting of THE WEEKLY STANDARD's Jenna Lifhits pointed out two U.S. bank transfers to Iran in the last 14 months, the White House couldn't explain itself. It is now admitting that it has no way of ensuring cash given to Iran isn't financing terrorism.

The obvious explanation for the White House's incessant dishonesty is that telling the truth would arouse opposition from Congress and the public at large. The only thing keeping a tenuous lid on that outrage is the media's willingness to spin for the administration. Recall that the architect of Obama's spectacularly ill-advised Iran nuclear deal, Ben Rhodes, bragged to the *New York Times* that the success of the Iran deal hinged on creating an "echo chamber" among an easily manipulated media. Rhodes graduated from NYU with an MFA in creative writing,

so he certainly qualifies as an expert in crafting narratives.

But the truth tends to emerge, and the 41 people injured on September 17 are certainly inconvenient for the White House's ongoing terror narrative. Even a pliant media are struggling to imbue the White House's preferred metaphors with authority. On CNN, Reuters terror expert David Rohde, downplaying fears of coordinated terror attacks, explained that multiple terror attacks on the same day could simply be the result of "two or three lone wolves who somehow got together and radicalized online."

If you want to put out an effective, truthful political narrative, actions speak louder than words. The White House has next to no tangible successes they can point to in response to aggression by terror sponsors and increasing domestic terror attacks. Instead of redoubling their efforts to win a literal war with literal bombs, their conception of reassurance involves going on television to talk about how to win a "narrative fight." This is humiliating and more than a little insulting. If the White House weren't so oblivious, they'd realize they can spout their preferred narrative, such as it is, until they're blue in the face. Because no one believes them anymore.

—Mark Hemingway



White House press secretary Josh Earnest



# We Got Lucky . . . This Time

ISIS-inspired attackers wreak havoc, again.

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN



*A robot approaches an unexploded pressure cooker bomb on 27th Street in New York City, hours after an explosion nearby, September 18, 2016.*

At approximately 9:35 A.M. on Saturday, September 17, a garbage can exploded along the route of the Seaside Semper Five Marine Corps Charity 5K Race in Seaside Park, New Jersey. Fortunately, no one was injured. The event's organizers later cited a delay, caused by registration problems and a suspicious backpack that had to be investigated, as a blessing in disguise. Had the race started on time, participants could have been killed or wounded. No one knew it yet, but America was about to get lucky several more times in the hours that followed.

The pipe bomb explosion at Seaside Park was the first of five attacks planned for that day. On 23rd Street in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City that night, a much larger bomb made out of a pressure cooker rocked storefronts and sent shrapnel

hundreds of feet in every direction. No one was killed, but 31 people were wounded. A separate bomb, built in a similar manner, was intercepted before it could explode just several blocks away on 27th Street. Still more improvised explosive devices were later found inside a backpack at a train station in Elizabeth, N.J. Those IEDs were also neutralized.

Adding to the chaos that Saturday evening, a young Somali man began stabbing men and women at the Crossroads Center mall in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Again, the mallgoers were fortunate. Ten people were wounded, but none perished.

Two days after the bombings and stabbings, President Obama sought to reassure Americans. The president noted, correctly, that "counterterrorism and law enforcement professionals at every level," federal, state, and local, have "thwarted many plots and saved many lives" through the years. "At this point," Obama claimed, "we see no

connection between that incident [in Minnesota] and what happened here in New York and New Jersey."

The president may be right, in the sense that there was no direct relationship between the two men who attacked in the Midwest and the Northeast. However, there is at least one connection between the terrorists, even if it is only ideological: They were both jihadists. And the more we've learned about them, the more reasons we have to suspect that they were at least inspired by the Islamic State, or ISIS.

Twenty-two-year-old Dahir Adan, a Somali immigrant, was dressed as a security guard when he entered the Crossroads Center mall and began stabbing people. During a press conference in the early morning hours of Sunday, September 18, St. Cloud police chief William Blair Anderson said that Adan "made some references to Allah" and asked at least one of the victims if he or she was a Muslim.

That second detail may be especially significant. Al Qaeda's jihadists have carried out several massacres in which Muslims were sorted from non-Muslims. The most brutal of these took place at the Westgate Mall, in Nairobi, Kenya, during a multiday siege that began on September 21, 2013. Terrorists dispatched by al Shabaab, al Qaeda's East African branch, tested potential victims on their knowledge of basic Islamic phrases and history. Those deemed Muslim were freed. Non-Muslims were massacred by the dozens, with many more wounded. Three years later nearly to the day, Adan, who was born in Kenya, performed some version of this same test.

The Islamic State has adopted this sorting method on occasion as well. In early July, several terrorists reportedly separated Muslims from non-Muslims during an attack at a restaurant in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Amaq News Agency, a propaganda arm of the Islamic State, was quick to claim credit for Adan's terror. "The executor of the stabbing attacks in Minnesota yesterday was a soldier of the Islamic State and carried out the operation in response to calls to target

*Thomas Joscelyn is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.*



the citizens of countries belonging to the crusader coalition,” Amaq’s statement read. That language is nearly identical to the statements issued after several small-scale operations in Europe this past summer. At least some of the terrorists responsible for those attacks had ties, even if only via the Internet, to Islamic State operatives. Indeed, the so-called caliphate has become increasingly efficient at providing digital direction to aspiring terrorists.

It is too early to tell if Adan had significant ties to the Islamic State, online or otherwise. But the stabbings he carried out are precisely the sort of violence the Islamic State has sought to instigate.

On September 19, Ahmad Khan Rahami was captured after a shootout with police in Linden, N.J. Rahami, a 28-year-old naturalized citizen whose family is from Afghanistan, was found sleeping in the doorway of a local bar. He is charged with the bombings in New York and New Jersey.

When authorities took Rahami into custody, they discovered a blood-soaked notebook with his scribbles inside it. The complaint filed by the Department of Justice the day after Rahami’s arrest noted that he had referenced “the instructions of terrorist leaders that, if travel is infeasible, to attack nonbelievers where they live.” The complaint accurately stated that Rahami had praised Osama bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki, an al Qaeda ideologue who plotted and inspired attacks in the West before he was killed in a 2011 drone strike. But the complaint oddly left out another key name: Abu Muhammad al-Adnani.

Adnani, who was killed in an American airstrike in August, served as the Islamic State’s spokesman and oversaw the group’s anti-Western plotting. In May, Adnani told followers that if Western nations have “shut the door of *hijrah* [migration] in your faces,” then they should “open the door of jihad in theirs,” meaning in Europe or the United States. “Make your deed a source of their regret,” Adnani said. “Truly, the smallest act you do in their lands is more beloved to us than the

biggest act done here; it is more effective for us and more harmful to them.”

Adnani’s name is clearly legible under Awlaki’s name on the page of Rahami’s notebook that references what the complaint describes as “the instructions of terrorist leaders.” That same page contains the word *Dawla*, which means “state” and is frequently used as a shorthand for the Islamic State. IS has not yet claimed credit for Rahami’s attack.

There is still much we don’t know about Dahir Adan and Ahmad Khan Rahami. Authorities are investigating Adan’s digital footprints and reinvestigating Rahami’s trips in recent years to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey. But we do know this: Lady Luck played the biggest role in stopping the jihadists from killing men, women, and children on September 17.

The bomb Rahami is believed to

have placed in Chelsea wounded 31 people, but could have easily killed many of them. According to the complaint filed in Rahami’s case, the bomb was “comprised of a high-explosive main charge” and “packed with ball bearings and steel nuts, hundreds of which were recovered from the blast site.” It blew out windows 400 feet away and up to three stories high. Fortunately, the bomb was somewhat incompetently placed inside a dumpster, which absorbed much of its blast and lessened its destruction. And in St. Cloud, an off-duty policeman and firearms instructor, Jason Falconer, shot and killed Dahir Adan mid-rampage.

If more capable terrorists decide to strike in the coming months, we might not be as lucky. Rahami’s notebook included a reference to attacking the *Kuffar* (nonbelievers) “in their backyard.” ♦

## Virginia Slim: The Race Tightens

Trump on the rise in the Old Dominion.

BY FRED BARNES

Stephen Farnsworth, a political science professor at the University of Mary Washington, addressed a local group in Fredericksburg, Virginia, last week and talked about Donald Trump’s chances of winning the state. A Trump supporter thought he was downplaying Trump’s prospects and left in a huff, muttering a string of epithets.

Thanks to two polls, Trump partisans are no longer glum about Virginia, a state that President Obama won twice and Hillary Clinton led by 16 percentage points over Trump in a Roanoke College poll last month.

Indeed, Trump was doing so poorly

following the Republican convention in July that the Clinton campaign cut back on its effort in Virginia. This made sense once Virginia senator Tim Kaine was tapped as Clinton’s vice presidential running mate. Many Republican strategists agreed a Clinton victory was baked in the cake.

No more. Oddly enough, it was a poll by UMW, directed by Farnsworth and released on September 15, that roused Trump backers. It showed him trailing Hillary by three points, 40-37 percent. And in Roanoke College’s new poll, Clinton lost nine points and now leads Trump 44 to 37 percent.

Even before the encouraging polls, the Trump campaign, the Republican National Committee, and the Virginia GOP had quietly begun building a

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at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

ground game in Virginia with nearly 350 paid staffers and 30 offices. “The last three weeks have been crazy in terms of investment,” says Republican state chairman John Whitbeck. “We’ve given Donald Trump the greatest ground game possible.”

Trump has spent little on TV ads and has no plans to unleash an advertising blitz. He is relying instead on “earned media”—that is, press coverage—social media, troops in the field, and Trump himself. As of last week, he had visited the state five times since the convention and running mate Mike Pence four times. Whitbeck says the GOP ground game is the third biggest in the country after Ohio and Florida.

“I think Trump has a good chance to win,” says Virginia house speaker William Howell.

And Farnsworth suggests the Clinton campaign made a mistake in scaling back its emphasis on the state. It “needs to stick to the Obama playbook,” he says, in which Virginia was seen as a critical part of a winning coalition.

Trump can defeat Clinton without Virginia, but winning would help. Except that winning Virginia may be one of the most difficult tasks his campaign faces. The reason is simple: The demographics of the state scarcely resemble those of the years from 1968 to 2004 when Republican presidential candidates won the state in 10 straight elections.

Over the past decade, “it’s like a dam broke,” says Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia, an authority on the state’s politics. Virginia has changed from a conservative “museum piece,” as scholar V.O. Key called it, to a highly diversified state with a slightly Democratic tilt in national elections.

In 1910, 90 percent of Virginians were born in the state. In 2016, 51 percent were born elsewhere. A half-century ago, only 10 percent of the statewide vote came from Northern Virginia.

Today, more than 30 percent does.

And Sabato says there are “little Northern Virginias” around the state, with diversified and racially mixed populations. One is Henrico County in the Richmond suburbs, which votes Democratic in most state and national elections. Another is the Hampton Roads area.



Supporters outside a Trump rally in Fredericksburg, Virginia, August 20, 2016

The fastest growing areas are the state’s 20 college towns. They tend to be liberal and Democratic. Charlottesville, the home of the University of Virginia, and surrounding Albemarle County once voted Republican in presidential races but are now lopsidedly Democratic.

The biggest question for Trump is where to find voters to close the gap with Clinton. Northern Virginia is a major target, but Sabato says Trump “has very little chance connecting with people” there.

Corey Stewart, the Trump campaign chairman in Virginia, disagrees. He says the outer suburban counties of Washington are ripe for the taking by Trump—Loudoun, Prince William, and western Fairfax. Stewart is chairman of the board of supervisors of Prince William County.

This swath of Virginia was largely rural before a residential growth spurt over the past several decades. “There are lots of independent voters, swing voters,” Stewart insists. “The number of persuadables is huge, a few hundred thousand.”

When Mitt Romney lost Virginia by four percentage points in 2012, it was in Northern Virginia that his campaign died. A rule of thumb is that a Republican needs at least 40 percent in Fairfax County to win statewide. He got 39 percent. And a Republican must win in Loudoun and Prince William. Romney lost both.

Pulling off a landslide in the Shenandoah Valley and the coal country of southwest Virginia—and Trump will need one—should be less difficult. Romney won 59 percent and 63 percent in the region’s two congressional districts. Trump will need 70 percent in each, according to Whitbeck.

Why are Trump’s prospects better in 2016? Stewart says Romney’s opponent, Obama, was an exciting candidate. But Clinton isn’t. “In

2016 we have the exciting candidate,” he says, referring to Trump. “Clinton is really stumbling and Trump continues to strengthen.”

Douglas Wilder, who became Virginia’s and the nation’s first elected black governor when he won in 1989, told the *Washington Post* that many Democrats “don’t see the need” to vote for Clinton. “It’s not so much that people are turned off by Hillary as it is they’re not turned on by anybody.”

Wilder said Clinton can’t win in Virginia without a strong turnout by African Americans. And Clinton has yet to give African Americans a “detailed” agenda for better schools, less crime, and more jobs. “If she doesn’t, the excitement that she needs may not be there,” he said.

Wilder is often mentioned these days in Virginia, but not because of his sage political advice. It’s the way he won. Wilder trailed in polls throughout the race, as many white voters declined to say they would vote for a black governor. “It’s the Wilder effect,” Howell, the House speaker, says. “It’s probably the same with Trump.” ♦

GERALD HERBERT / AP



# Electoral Mapmaking

Five paths to victory for Trump.

BY JEFFREY H. ANDERSON



*Trump signs autographs after a rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, April 21, 2016.*

One of the most pervasive myths in American politics is that a “Big Blue Wall” will protect Democratic presidential nominees, perhaps even those who lose the popular vote. In truth, this electoral Blue Wall is more like a collection of disconnected forts—some imposing, some not—and the loss of any one of them would likely doom the Democratic nominee.

The Blue Wall—states where the Democrats have won every presidential race since 1992—includes the entire Northeast except for New Hampshire, the Midwestern Great Lakes states aside from Ohio and Indiana, the three Pacific Coast states, and Hawaii. Even holding the wall is no guarantee of victory. John Kerry won the entire Blue Wall in 2004, plus New Hampshire, yet still lost to George W. Bush by 35 electoral votes. Al Gore won the entire

Blue Wall in 2000—back when it was worth 13 more electoral votes—plus Iowa and New Mexico, yet still lost to Bush by 5 electoral votes. For the Democrats, holding the Blue Wall is necessary but not sufficient.

It is often claimed that Donald Trump has several must-win states, and this is true (although the states listed are often wrong). In addition to the 23 states that Mitt Romney won by at least 7 percentage points, which Trump isn’t going to lose, Trump has 3 must-win states: Ohio, Florida, and North Carolina. (Polling finds that Trump narrowly overtook Clinton in mid-September in all three.) If Hillary Clinton wins any of those states, it’ll be a knockout blow.

But in addition to the 15 states where President Obama beat Romney by at least 10 points, which Clinton isn’t going to lose, Clinton has 5 must-win states: Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Virginia. (Polling finds her ahead in all five.) The first four are part of the Blue

Wall; the Old Dominion is not. If Trump wins any of those states, he’ll be headed to the White House.

So there are eight potential knockout states in this election, and five of them are being defended by Hillary Clinton.

If both candidates win their respective must-win states (and split the two competitive congressional districts in Nebraska and Maine), that will bring the electoral-vote tally to 260 for Clinton and 253 for Trump, with Colorado, Nevada, Iowa, and New Hampshire (25 combined electoral votes) still in play. Clinton’s task would then be to win any two of the four remaining states; Trump’s task would be to win any three. If Clinton wins Colorado and Trump wins the other three, the candidates would be tied at 269, with the election moving to the House of Representatives.

## THE FIVE PATHS

Clinton’s path to 270 is relatively simple: (a) steal Ohio, Florida, or North Carolina; or (b) win her five must-win states and prevent Trump from getting 16 more electoral votes from among the 25 remaining on the board. (If Clinton wins right-leaning Ohio, Florida, or North Carolina, there’s no way she’ll fail to win the requisite number of left-leaning states.) Trump’s task is to win his 3 must-win states (plus the 23 states that are givens) and then follow any one of five different paths to winning the remaining 17 electoral votes he’d need to achieve victory.

*The Virginia Path:* Many commentators quickly wrote Virginia off for Trump. This reflected unfavorable early polling as well as Republicans’ demoralization over Virginia’s having moved left in recent years. But Trump’s poll numbers have looked much better there of late, and Republicans have generally overreacted to the Old Dominion’s leftward shift. Moreover, the early polling in Virginia was surely affected by Clinton’s having had ads on the air there while Trump didn’t. By late August, Clinton had spent more than \$5 million on ads

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MARK MAKELA / GETTY

in Virginia, according to Associated Press tallies, to Trump's \$0.

Of all the left-leaning states, Virginia is the most centrist. It was just 0.02 points to the left of the national average in the 2012 presidential election, and it slid only 1 point further leftward between 2008 and 2012. It's also where Trump's efforts to reach out to black voters—which he's done more than any other GOP nominee in memory—could pay off. Roughly 20 percent of Virginia's population is black, compared with 13 percent nationally.

If Trump wins Virginia, then he almost surely isn't going to lose Florida or North Carolina (both of which are noticeably to Virginia's right), almost surely isn't going to lose populist Iowa (where polls suggest he is faring about 5 points better than he is nationally), and isn't likely to lose Ohio (which is a bit to the right of Virginia and shows him polling better). The combination of these states would give him 272 electoral votes.

During the week of September 4-10, Trump smartly spent \$2.2 million in Virginia—double what he spent in any other state—according to AP. Clinton, meanwhile, spent \$0, choosing instead to waste money in Arizona and Georgia, where she isn't going to win and doesn't need to win.

*The Midwestern Path:* Normally, Michigan would be too heavy of a lift for a Republican candidate in a close race. On average, across the past five presidential contests, the state has been 6 points to the left of the nation. But Trump's working-class message and manner seem tailor-made for Michigan, and it's possible he could turn the state, as Obama did Virginia in 2008. Alternatively, he could pull off an upset in Wisconsin or Minnesota, states that are generally to the right of Michigan.

Clinton hasn't run any ads in Michigan (or Wisconsin or Minnesota), while Trump has run a few there of late. Trump announced his economic plan in Detroit and delivered one of his campaign's best lines just down the road: "[I]t used to be, cars were made in Flint and you couldn't drink the water in Mexico. Now the cars are made in Mexico and you can't drink the water in Flint."

If Trump wins his must-win states, plus Michigan and Iowa, he would have 275 electoral votes.

*The Colorado Path:* Between June 12 and July 16, Clinton spent about \$4 million unopposed in Colorado, while building up a double-digit lead there in the polls. But the

Trump campaign didn't write off the state. It spent \$1.1 million there from September 4 to 10, according to AP, to Clinton's \$47,000. The only Colorado poll taken in September (released on September 15) found Trump up 4 points.

Colorado is a somewhat volatile state whose voters may not be inclined to back the third Obama term for which Clinton is effectively running. The state was slightly left of the nation in 2008 and 2012, but by less than 2 points each time. In each of the past four elections, it has supported the winner by more than he has won by nationwide. Additionally, Coloradans haven't seemed too impressed with the Clintons in the past. After more or less mirroring the nation and backing Bill Clinton by 4.3 points in 1992 (he won by 5.6 points nationally), Colorado swung far to the right of the nation in 1996, supporting Bob Dole by 1.4 points in a race that Clinton won by 8.5 points nationwide.

If Trump were to hold his must-win states and win Iowa, he could win the presidency by pairing a win in Colorado with one in either Nevada or New Hampshire. He could also get to 269—and the House—by winning his must-win states, Iowa, Colorado, and Maine's 2nd Congressional District (worth one electoral vote), where polling finds him up 5 points (per *Real Clear Politics*).

*The New Hampshire Path:* While Clinton was squandering money in Arizona and Georgia, Trump sensibly outspent her \$576,000 to \$350,000 in New Hampshire during the week of September 4-10. New Hampshire is famously populist and independent, is predominantly white, and has an older population (which usually favors Trump). Trump did extremely well there in the GOP primary. While the *Real Clear Politics* average finds Clinton up by roughly 5 points in the Granite State, she has outspent Trump there to date by a tally of \$5.2 million to \$598,000. During the week of September 11, after Clinton was propped up, picked up, and folded





into her van, she spent more on ads in New Hampshire than in any other week so far, while Trump didn't press his advantage.

If Trump holds his must-win states, a win in New Hampshire, paired with wins in Iowa, Nevada, and Maine CD-2 (or in Iowa and Colorado) would get him to 270 (or 272, in the Colorado scenario) without having to win a single left-leaning state with double-digit electoral votes. This inviting path could be complicated, however, by national Republicans' apparent and peculiar reluctance to fund Senator Kelly Ayotte's reelection bid. *RCP*, which reported this reticence, shows Ayotte with a narrow 2-point lead, despite her having been outspent two-to-one. New Hampshire is a small state, but it's not impossible that it could end up deciding which party controls both the White House and the Senate.

*The Pennsylvania Path:* The most oft-discussed path to a Trump win is through Pennsylvania. Paired with victories in his must-win states, a triumph in Pennsylvania would give Trump 273 electoral votes.

Trump's platform and personality seem well-suited to the Keystone State, but it's hard to say how things are shaping up there. On the one hand, Clinton is polling strongly in the state, faring about 5 points better than she is nationally. On the other hand, AP reports she has outspent Trump there by about five-to-one. It could be that Pennsylvania will continue its streak, now dating back 16 presidential elections (to 1952), of going to the Republicans only when the Republican wins by enough nationally that he doesn't need it.

Trump can win without Pennsylvania, though. Indeed, he might have a better shot at victory via the Virginia, Michigan, Colorado, and New Hampshire paths. His best strategy at this point would seem to be to make Clinton defend all five paths, which is what his campaign appears to have in mind. That might put a degree of strain on the Blue Wall that the fabled fortification can't withstand. ♦

GARY LOCKE

# Grand New Party?

Evan McMullin hopes to start a conservative counter-reformation. BY JONATHAN V. LAST

**W**e need to start voting for leaders whom we actually want to see in office," Evan McMullin says as we sit together in a small conference room. "Or we will never get them."



McMullin is running the longest of long-shot campaigns. He announced an independent bid for the presidency just seven weeks ago. He's on the ballot in only 11 states, though he's got ballot access as a write-in candidate in 16 others and expects to be ballot-eligible in 40 states by Election Day. He is unlikely to have the financial

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resources to run even a single TV ad.

What McMullin has going for him is this: He's smart. He has expertise in counterterrorism. His foreign-policy worldview is much closer to the mainstream than anyone else running this cycle. He is genuinely conservative. And he is—this cannot be emphasized enough—a normal human being.

Usually it's the crazies who run as third-party candidates. Look back through the recent history of third-party presidential runs and you see a crusading consumer-rights advocate (Ralph Nader), a disgruntled-but-militant former Republican congressman (Bob Barr), a pothead former governor (Gary Johnson), and a conspiracy-addled Texas businessman (Ross Perot). Not a normal banana in the bunch—and those are guys who got more than 500,000 votes.

McMullin is nothing like those sideshow candidates. If anything, he bears a distant resemblance to the only other reasonable man to run as a third-party candidate in the modern era—John Anderson. And Anderson got almost 6 million votes.

McMullin is a good distance off of that pace. But he's starting to register in some polls—at 1 percent nationally, but 3 percent in Virginia and 9 percent in Utah. The campaign's not-unreasonable view, explains chief strategist Joel Searby, is that as the Trump-Clinton race tightens, "that elevates our status in this race significantly. And we have a real chance to make a significant difference."

If McMullin pulled 3 percent nationally, he'd earn as many votes as Anderson did in 1980. And it's not hard to see his appeal: McMullin went to Brigham Young University, got an MBA at Wharton, and then joined the CIA. He spent 11 years in the clandestine service fighting the war on

terror before mustering out and going to work for Goldman Sachs in Silicon Valley—after which he decamped to Washington, where he became the chief policy adviser for the House Republican caucus.

So he's an interesting combination—both a former spook with an understanding of field operations and a wonk's wonk who engages with policy at a high level. He's also conservative in the traditional sense—which was almost universally accepted in the Republican party until five months ago. All of this makes him unique in the 2016 field: Neither Clinton nor Trump has any firsthand understanding of either military or intelligence work. And both are politically liberal.

Consider, for example, how McMullin discusses foreign policy. In a speech at Georgetown University last week, McMullin said that America is the “most powerful nation on earth,” but:

This power comes with important obligations, which include a deep concern for the liberty of all mankind and a willingness to be a leader among nations. If not for American commitment to liberty, others would fear our power instead of welcoming, or even relying upon, our leadership. . . . In recent years, we have seen what the world looks like without engaged American leadership. Terrorist armies expand, dictators slaughter innocent civilians, authoritarians invade neighboring nations, refugees flood the world, and extremist ideologies penetrate even the freest of nations. Old enemies stir again, greedy for land, for influence, and for domination.

What's striking when you hear McMullin talk about “liberty”—he mentions it often, along with “freedom”—is the realization that it is a word Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump almost never utter. And for good reason: It is a value that neither the Democratic nor the Republican nominee holds in particularly high esteem. The former is devoted to “equality” while the latter worships “strength.”

All of that said, McMullin is not a starry-eyed dreamer. His campaign is bullish on its growth potential, but realistic about the election. For instance,

those Virginia and Utah polls showing McMullin at 3 percent and 9 percent, respectively, were taken after he had been in the race for only three weeks. Searby believes they'll soon be registering “in the places where we're active—like Ohio and Iowa and Minnesota and Colorado. We're on the ballot in all of those states,” he says. “And so if you start thinking about how thin the margins could be in this race and the fact that we're already polling from 1 percent to 9 percent in a given state, that's a difference-making percentage.”

At most, the McMullin campaign believes he could win a state or two and throw a tight election to the

**At most, the McMullin campaign believes he could win a state or two and throw a tight election to the House. 'But we're not banking our entire existence on that,' strategist Joel Searby says. 'We also believe, deeply, that it's time for a new generation of American leadership.'**

House. “But we're not banking our entire existence on that,” Searby says. “We also believe, deeply, that it's time for a new generation of American leadership. And so we are building this movement. And that is an equally important goal to us.”

Which leads to the key question of 2016: Has Donald Trump poisoned the GOP beyond saving, forcing conservatives to form a new party? McMullin minces no words about Trump.

“Not enough” has been made of Vladimir Putin's role in the 2016 election, McMullin says. “Putin is clearly trying to destabilize our democracy. He's doing that through his support of Donald Trump.”

“The challenge is that most Americans don't have the experience of having served in intelligence as I have, so they can't necessarily see this developing as directly as I do.” He points to the Putin-controlled cable network RT

America, which has shown a Hannity-like devotion to Trump. And Trump has returned the favor, appearing in an exclusive interview on the network.

Then there's WikiLeaks, which now appears to be a wholly owned subsidiary of Russian intelligence. There are the Russian pro-Trump Twitter mobs. There was Paul Manafort with his Russian connections; the reports of Trump's financial entanglements with Russian investors; and the uncomfortable support of General Mike Flynn. “Flynn is a terrible disappointment as a retired intelligence officer,” McMullin notes acidly. “He's on the payroll of RT America and has become a sympathizer for Vladimir Putin. One has to wonder about that.”

McMullin points out that Trump has flipped on nearly every issue imaginable—from immigration to taxes to abortion; from the Iraq war to his party registration. “The one thing Trump will *not* compromise on is his support for Putin,” McMullin says. “And it makes you wonder why he would be so committed to a man who is actively trying to undermine democracies in Europe and the United States.”

“As a former CIA officer,” he says carefully, “I firmly believe that Donald Trump poses a threat to our democracy.”

McMullin's campaign actually appears to be about something bigger than the 2016 presidential race. If Trumpism is the future of the Republican party, I asked him, do we need a new party?

His answer surprised me in its certitude. “I believe we do,” he said evenly.

“We're organizing and building for a movement,” Searby, the campaign strategist, explains. “We already have state chairs in 35 states and they're helping organize. In places like Wisconsin, we already have 35 *county* chairmen lined up. In places like Ohio, we already have county chairmen lined up. And Iowa. And Utah. So the kind of things that a traditional party would do, we've already been doing those things. And so we're laying groundwork to have an army of people who want to be a part of whatever comes next.” ♦



# So You Want to Write a Novel

That's not appropriate.

BY DOMINIC GREEN

**W**e need to talk about Lionel Shriver. On September 8, the author of *We Need to Talk About Kevin* and several other novels gave the keynote speech at the Brisbane Writers' Festival. Shriver had wanted to talk about "fiction and identity politics," but the organizers asked her to talk about "community and belonging." She talked about fiction and identity politics anyway.

Shriver argued that fiction and identity politics are fundamentally inimical. Fiction is "inherently inauthentic" and "self-confessedly fake." It describes individuals who do not exist and events that do not happen. Identity politics is about "authenticity." It sees individuals as representing collective identities and politics. Novelists appropriate other lives and "purloin whole worlds." The "culture police" call this "cultural appropriation" and throw away the key.

"Taken to their logical conclusion, ideologies recently come into vogue challenge our right to write fiction at all," Shriver declared. "Meanwhile, the kind of fiction we are 'allowed' to write is in danger of becoming so hedged, so circumscribed, so tippy-toe, that we'd indeed be better off not writing the anodyne drivel to begin with."

Shriver admitted to being intimidated by the "culture police." Raised in North Carolina, she had a "pretty good ear" for dialects, and once "didn't hesitate to write black characters." But some of the reviews of her most recent novel, *The Mandibles*, have made her "anxious about depicting characters of different races."

*Dominic Green, the author of Three Empires on the Nile, teaches politics at Boston College.*



Above, Shriver dons her—gasp!—sombrero.



Yassmin Abdel-Magied appropriating plaid, April 28, 2016

*The Mandibles* is a futuristic satire, set in 2047. It imagines the decline of America through the decline of one family. Its patriarch, Douglas, has left his wife for Luella, an African American. She becomes senile, and the family end up on the street. Eventually,

they "put the addled, disoriented Luella on a leash, to keep her from wandering off."

The reviewer for the *Washington Post* called *The Mandibles* "racist." But Luella is leashed because she is senile, not because of her color, and because the collapse of the dollar has taken America's social services with it. The image of a yoked African American evokes the worst of American history. Shriver raises it as a specter of the future, summoned by a different kind of economic immorality.

The image is distasteful, but then so was Jonathan Swift's image of cannibalism in *A Modest Proposal*. Satirists are moralists, and they moralize through our distress. It is for individual readers to decide whether *The Mandibles* succeeds or fails as a work of imagination. To do that, Shriver must be allowed to express herself, and we must be allowed to read.

Shriver, who remarked on her reputation as an "iconoclast," must have known that the image of Luella on a leash would be controversial. In Brisbane, she donned a sombrero, in symbolic rebuke of the administration of Bowdoin College, which had placed students on probation for wearing sombreros to a tequila-themed party. She suspects that social media are carrying the foul wind of political correctness from the campus into the adult world. Her speech and headgear caught that wind and were carried around the world faster than a crate of Vegemite.

Two days later, the *Guardian* published an attack on Shriver by Yassmin Abdel-Magied, a Sudanese-born Australian activist. Abdel-Magied had walked out during Shriver's speech, after detecting "the stench of privilege." So she probably missed Shriver's reasoned conclusion, that to represent reality, novelists must retain "the right to wear many hats—including sombreros."

Shriver had discussed *Little Bee*, the 2008 novel by Chris Cleave. He is a 43-year-old white British male, his protagonist a 14-year-old Nigerian girl. Shriver did not judge whether Cleave had "got away with it" in terms of plausibility and literary quality—"I

TOP: TWITTER; BELOW: ERIN MACLEAN

haven't read the book yet"—but she did "admire his courage." To escape the limits of the author's personal experience is "part of a fiction writer's job." After all, crime writers are not serial killers, and Dickens did not run a gang of juvenile pickpockets.

Abdel-Magied accused Shriver of "racial supremacy," cultural "disrespect," and the "kind of attitude that lays the foundation for prejudice, for hate, for genocide." Shriver's speech was "a celebration of the unfettered exploitation of the experiences of others." Cleave did not have the right to write *Little Bee*, because "the actual Nigerian woman can't get published or reviewed."

Nor was it possible for us to read Shriver's actual words, at first. The organizers of the Brisbane conference removed her speech from their website. The *Guardian* ran Abdel-Magied's attack three days before it published a transcript of Shriver's speech. Her concerns about censorship had been censored.

"In our age," Orwell wrote in "The Prevention of Literature" (1946), "the idea of intellectual liberty is under attack from two directions. On the one side are its theoretical enemies, the apologists of totalitarianism, and on the other its immediate, practical enemies, monopoly and bureaucracy."

The "practical enemies" are economic, and erode intellectual independence by demanding conformity of product. The "theoretical enemies" are the real danger. Deliberately or not, the theorists wish to prevent literature entirely. They demand the "falsification of reality" according to their preferred dogma.

This denies the nature of literary creation. All art grows by appropriation, and "the imagination, like certain wild animals, will not breed in captivity." To condition the right to write on an author's place in the hierarchies of sex, color, and class is to replace the challenges of the market with the strictures of dictatorship.

Fiction is not true; that is why it is easily dismissed. Fiction is made up; that is why every species of tyrant and bully has sought to limit it. Works of

art possess the power to evoke other lives and other states of mind, to create private emotions and empathy with those different from us. Privacy and empathy are foundational to liberal civilization. For the same reason, they are anathema to tyrants.

The peculiarity of Western culture, Orwell observed, was that the "intellectuals," the people who stand to gain most from creative liberty, are the ones calling for censorship. It makes little difference whether the censorship is that of Communists and class snobs, as in Orwell's day, or academics and Islamists, as in ours. The outcomes are the same: the restriction of individual expression and impoverishment of culture.

Imagine your mind without the "cultural appropriation" of *Othello* and *Huckleberry Finn*, or the colonization of the English language by Joseph Conrad and Vladimir Nabokov, or the

colonization of England by T.S. Eliot and Henry James. No more popular music, either, because the chords of the blues came from English hymns. And the French are taking back the movies. What remains is parched, gray dullness, politically correct and utterly barren. If we try hard enough, Orwell thought, we might be able to extinguish entirely the "liberal culture that we have lived in since the Renaissance."

As Shriver said, the democratic exchange of people and ideas is "self-evidently one of the most productive, fascinating aspects of modern urban life." The right to "appropriate" should not be in question, only the quality of the appropriation. Which brings us to the tartan pantaloons that Yassmin Abdel-Magied sports in the photograph on her Wikipedia page. This is a shameful appropriation of the indigenous culture of Scotland's first people—not appropriate. ♦

# The Taiwan Strait Freezes

Beijing snubs Taipei.

BY ETHAN EPSTEIN

*Taibo City, Taiwan*

The Jadeite Cabbage, an exquisite 19th-century jade carving made to look like a head of Chinese cabbage (I'm not really doing it justice), is essentially the *Mona Lisa* of Chinese art. I know this because when I visited the National Palace Museum in Taipei a few years back, I could barely see the thing. The darkened room the cabbage was sequestered in was mobbed, with scores of tourists jostling just to get a glimpse (and more important, a blurry, partially obscured

photograph) of the gleaming work. Most of the excited tourists—I'd estimate up to three-quarters—hailed from the Chinese mainland.

What a difference three years makes. The cabbage is currently on display at the southern branch of the National Palace Museum in Taibo, a 90-minute high-speed train ride from Taipei. On a visit there, I practically had my run of the place. Nary a Chinese tour group—easily spottable, with their flag-holding tour guides—was in sight. While this is partially because the southern branch of the Palace Museum draws fewer guests than the main branch in Taipei, that's not the whole story.

Mainland tourism to Taiwan has

*Ethan Epstein, associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD, traveled as a guest of the Taiwanese ministry of foreign affairs.*



fallen off a cliff this year—Taiwanese government data suggest a 30 percent year-over-year fall in visits, down from the more than four million Chinese who made the cross-strait trip in 2015. It's causing serious economic hardship for many: About 10,000 Taiwanese employed in the tourism sector marched in Taipei in mid-September, demanding a fix.

It's politics, not a newfound aversion to Taiwan's gorgeous tropical scenery, that explains the plunge. In May, Taiwan inaugurated a new president, a 60-year-old former law professor named Tsai Ing-wen. Tsai, Taiwan's first female leader, hails from the Democratic Progressive party (DPP), the ideological home of those Taiwanese who support formally declaring independence from mainland China. She replaced a Kuomintang party member, Ma Ying-jeou, who was notable for the warm relations he pursued with Beijing. Under Ma's leadership, cross-strait trade and tourism flourished. (Mainland China is now Taiwan's largest trading partner.) Ma even met with Chinese president Xi Jinping, the first time that Beijing's and Taipei's leaders had met since the conclusion of the Chinese civil war in 1949. To Beijing's delight, Ma accepted the so-called 1992 Consensus, which holds that Taiwan and mainland China are one indivisible territory.

While Tsai was elected in large part due to domestic concerns—the economy slowed markedly in the final years of Ma's term and income inequality widened—Beijing took her election rather personally. Mainland China cut off official contact with the Taiwanese government shortly after Tsai's inauguration. Beijing also pressured local tour operators to scuttle Taiwan tours. (About half of Chinese tourists to Taiwan travel through package tours.) All this despite the fact that Tsai has been nothing if not cautious; she has not called for independence. Indeed, in her May 20 inaugural address, the new president

allowed that the slow détente of the last couple of decades has had benefits for both sides of the strait. "Over 20 years of interactions and negotiations across the strait have enabled and accumulated outcomes which both sides must collectively cherish and sustain," she

**In May, Taiwan inaugurated a new president, a 60-year-old former law professor named Tsai Ing-wen. Mainland China cut off official contact with the Taiwanese government shortly after her inauguration and pressured local tour operators to scuttle Taiwan tours.**



*A visitor examines the Jadeite Cabbage, May 26, 2014.*

said. Given that a big part of Tsai's political base is very hostile to China (I spoke with several DPP partisans who say they feel no connection to the mainland whatsoever), her stance was notably conciliatory.

Still, that wasn't enough to placate Xi Jinping's hardline government in Beijing. Consider the Communists' latest bit of pettiness. From late September to early October, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) will hold its triennial conference in Montreal. It's a largely

technical conference—aviation authorities from dozens of countries will hammer out issues pertaining to airline safety, security, environmental impact, and the like. But because ICAO is a U.N. body, and Taiwan is not a U.N. member state, the island's aviation authority is not on the invite list. In 2013, however, Taiwan was allowed to attend as a guest. Not this year. ICAO's secretary general is Chinese, and the body has not even responded to Taiwan's written request to attend again as a mere observer.

Local authorities are apoplectic at the snub. At a meeting in Taipei at Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration, a dozen aviation officials stressed that the blockage from ICAO is an unnecessary impediment to safety and efficiency—the country's airlines will have to rely on secondhand accounts of what gets discussed at ICAO. (Though, perhaps because they knew I was to fly home soon, they simultaneously stressed that Taiwanese aviation is perfectly safe.) At bottom, the ICAO issue represents Beijing's basic lack of respect for Taiwan.

In the meantime, Taiwan is looking elsewhere, trying to reduce its dependence on China. The Tsai government has inaugurated a "New Southbound Policy" designed to increase trade with India and Southeast Asian nations. The sensible idea is that Taiwan has put too many of its eggs in the China basket; fully 40 percent of its exports are sent to China and Hong Kong. Even were

Beijing a friendly regime, it's dangerous to rely that much on one economy. The Taiwanese government is also promoting tourism from other Asian countries, including South Korea and Thailand. (It recently introduced visa-free travel for Thais.) Indeed, some suggest that the fall-off in Chinese tourism could spur Taiwan to upgrade its service offerings and attract a more moneyed class of tourist.

If nothing else, there's never been a better time to see the Jadeite Cabbage. ♦

# California's Woeful Republicans

They might matter, oddly, in a Democrat vs. Democrat race. **BY MATTHEW FLEMING**



*Loretta Sanchez speaks to supporters in Anaheim on election night, June 7, 2016.*

Only in the craziest election cycle in recent memory could the candidate hoping to have Republicans carry her to victory in California's open Senate seat be a Latina Democrat.

Both candidates to succeed Barbara Boxer in the U.S. Senate are Democrats. This is thanks to California's Prop. 14, passed in 2010, which makes the general election in any statewide race a contest between the top two vote-getters in the primaries, regardless of party. This election is the first time a Republican has been shut out of a Senate race in the state. That presented Rep. Loretta Sanchez—the second of the top two—with a challenge and an opportunity.

Kamala Harris, the state's attorney general, is the frontrunner, the Democratic establishment's candidate with superior fundraising and statewide

name recognition. Sanchez knew that if she was to have a shot at winning, she would have to appeal to a broad coalition of Latinos, Democrats bucking the establishment, independents, and, yes, Republicans, who in California have been dwindling in numbers and relevance for years.

Sanchez's strategy could serve as the playbook for future statewide Latino candidates, who need Republicans to win, according to Mike Madrid, a Republican strategist who specializes in Latino issues. He points to demographic and geographic trends as proof that this "tenuous coalition" is the only way forward for both groups.

Compared with the Democrat party's liberal wing that dominates California politics, Latinos "have much more centrist views, especially on the economy and the environment," Madrid says. Their best hope to win statewide offices is to "work in coalition with Republicans."

California is a majority-minority state: Those who identify as Hispanic

or Latino overtook whites in 2015 as the largest ethnic group. A majority of both Latinos and the state's overall population call Southern California home. Despite that, Latinos and Southern Californians alike have difficulty winning statewide office. Currently only two of eight elected statewide office-holders are from Southern California; only one—California secretary of state Alex Padilla—is Latino.

Latinos haven't amassed the power they could in state politics because they don't turn out to vote in the numbers they could. (Both Democratic leaders in the state legislature are Southern California Latinos, but they are chosen by other lawmakers.) In the 2014 gubernatorial elections, only 28 percent of registered Latino voters went to the polls, compared with 49 percent of white registered voters. Los Angeles County is nearly half Latino or Hispanic, and is home to a quarter of the state's population. Registered-voter turnout there is anemic, just 31 percent in the 2014 general election, compared with 42 percent statewide.

The San Francisco Bay Area is substantially whiter, wealthier, more liberal, and more likely to vote. It has three million fewer people than L.A. County, but cast some 270,000 more votes in 2014. If Latino candidates hope to get elected as Democrats in statewide races, they need Bay Area liberals to support them. But as Madrid points out, liberal groups often embrace the non-Latino candidate.

This year's U.S. Senate race is a good example. Harris, a Bay Area native of Indian and Jamaican descent, has been endorsed by liberals everywhere—from President Barack Obama, to the Sierra Club, to Emily's List, to the Brady Campaign, to the editorial boards of the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Sacramento Bee*.

Sanchez's endorsements have been rather more provincial, but ideologically broader, including Republicans such as Representative Darrell Issa, radio host Hugh Hewitt, former representative Buck McKeon, former Los Angeles mayor Richard Riordan, and

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WALLY SKALLI / LOS ANGELES TIMES / GETTY



the *Orange County Register*, Sanchez's libertarian-leaning hometown paper.

Can a Democrat win by looking for Republicans to tip the scales? The GOP isn't exactly a political powerhouse in California: Only 27 percent of voters in the state are registered Republican. Still, combine them with the Latino vote, and Sanchez could theoretically put together a winning combination.

Sanchez was first elected to Congress in 1996, when she knocked off right-wing flamethrower "B-1" Bob Dornan to represent part of Orange County—once a Republican stronghold that turns bluer by the day. Relatively conservative on some fiscal issues, she serves on the House Armed Services Committee. *Congressional Quarterly* calls her a "debate shaper and swing vote," even though, as a House Democrat, she has spent most of her congressional career in the minority.

That said, Sanchez hasn't shied away from liberal stances on issues, especially immigration and health



*Kamala Harris at UCLA, January 30, 2016*

care. A Sanchez spokesman says the candidate won't abandon liberal issues just to win over Republicans, but adds she is looking for common ground with Republicans.

Alas, the outreach hasn't gotten her very far. Sanchez's campaign has suffered from weak fundraising and gaffes. And, no surprise, Harris has made a point of condemning her for wooing Republicans. In a recent fundraising email, the Harris campaign called Sanchez "desperate" for

"standing with Republicans," adding: "people are sick of the politics of division that define candidates like Donald Trump."

Sanchez, in turn, has suggested that Harris—the state attorney general, it will be remembered—failed to join in lawsuits against Trump University because she had accepted campaign contributions from the Trumps. (Harris later gave the Trump donations to charity.)

For all the convoluted politics of the race, one of the most vigorously contested issues between the candidates has been the number of debates. (There will be just one, limiting Sanchez's opportunities to close the gap with Harris.) Absent an October surprise, the debate will likely be Sanchez's last stand.

Even if it doesn't work in this election, Sanchez's counterintuitive strategy of uniting Latinos and Republicans in California may yet be the best hope either group has for success in statewide politics. ♦

## Meeting the Growing Cybersecurity Challenge

**By Thomas J. Donohue**

President and CEO  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

A decade ago you were more likely to read about cyberattacks in fiction books than in major newspapers. Not anymore. In recent years we've seen hackers deal high-profile blows to prominent companies, government agencies like the Office of Personnel Management, and even political committees during the heat of this election season. The cyber domain has emerged as a battlefield in the 21st century, and all of us—citizens, businesses, and government leaders—have been thrown into the fight.

The threat will keep growing as technology continues to integrate itself into our lives. The internet of things is already making more of our consumer products vulnerable to cyber intrusion. Hackers can now set their sights on wrist watches, cars, and smart home alarm systems just as easily as computers or phones,

compromising personal information and consumer data in innovative ways.

The businesses that create these products face the growing challenge of securing them, but they aren't alone. Virtually every business has information or assets stored in cyber systems. It's why I hear about cybersecurity concerns from businesses of every size and sector. They understand that an attack can shake the foundations of their companies—affecting continuity of operations, damaging brand value, violating customer trust, and threatening trade secrets.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce believes the private and public sectors must partner to address this challenge. They must do so in a way that balances our national security interests with the need to preserve flexibility for businesses. It's important to recognize that government cannot regulate us out of cyber peril, but it can very easily regulate us into it. Our cybersecurity policies must be flexible and adaptive to keep up with this constantly evolving threat.

It's in this spirit that the Chamber will bring together leaders from both business and government tomorrow for our 5th Annual Cybersecurity Summit. We will explore the latest threat landscape and discuss the future of cyber policy. We'll also urge businesses to adopt a proven cybersecurity risk management framework developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

Cybersecurity has emerged as one of the major challenges of our time. It's a matter of economic security and national security. Through cyberattacks, thieves can rob businesses and terrorists can wreak havoc from thousands of miles away. The Chamber is committed to protecting the technological systems that drive our economy, our government, and our private lives, though it's a task that truly belongs to all Americans.



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# Reversing Decline

*The example of Elizabethan England*

BY THOMAS DONNELLY

**I**s America in decline? The question has been catnip for the chattering classes for decades, especially during the Obama presidency. And now we have a presidential candidate who vows to “make America great again.” Says Donald Trump: “Our country is in serious trouble. We don’t win anymore. We don’t beat China in trade. . . . We can’t do anything right.” The problem is military as well as economic, he says: “I don’t mind fighting, but you have got to win, and . . . we don’t win wars, we just fight, we just fight. It’s like . . . you’re vomiting: just fight, fight, fight.”

The Trumpian version of American decline channels the anguish of residents in what Charles Murray has called “Fishtown,” a “neighborhood in Philadelphia that has been white working class since the Revolution.” The problems of America’s left-behind middle class are not simply economic but social; they’re not just relatively poorer and more frequently unemployed than they used to be, they’re also less likely to be married or to form stable families. By all of Murray’s metrics—industriousness, honesty, and religiosity among them—their America has come apart, unraveled. Their response, as expressed in enthusiasm for Trump, has been to embrace a kind of blood-and-soil nationalism.

Murray’s “Belmont”—“an archetypal upper-middle-class suburb near Boston” and the antipode of Fishtown—reflects the left version of decline. This may seem paradoxical, for Belmont is home to America’s winners of recent decades; when Democrats criticized Trump’s convention address as “dark” and “dystopian,” it was to Belmonsters that they spoke. President Obama believes that the “idea that America is somehow on the verge of collapse, this vision of violence and chaos everywhere, doesn’t really jibe with the experience of most people.”

But the bicoastal elites who have benefited from a globalized, information economy do in fact believe that, even if they are not, the rest of America is in decline, falling into Hillary Clinton’s “basket of deplorables.” The reptilian brain of Belmont is on daily display at, among

other websites, the *Huffington Post*, where columnists routinely lampoon the United States as a kind of Fishtown writ large. “It’s the world’s ripest banana republic. Welcome home,” *Huffington Post*—and *Washington Post*—contributor Peter Mandel recently wrote. “On the Republic’s bottom rungs, people exist on quick-fried snacks and look for work in restaurants where these are cooked.” Returning to Los Angeles from Australia, Maria Rodale wrote, “I felt betrayed and disgusted, and that was even before I got to the LA airport” (she’d been Down Under three whole weeks) “and saw our country’s slow, dirty, and unfriendly first-impression entryway.” She continued:

Looking at us from outside in, we are a country that is broken. Fundamentally and deeply broken. But because *today* we are entertained and *today* we are fed and *today* we might be fine, we don’t care about what impact our behavior has on the future. We are addicted to violence as pleasure. We celebrate violence in movies and the news as if a show of force is what makes us great. We celebrate greed and corruption in Washington and Wall Street, believing that somehow they represent the American dream.

Belmonsters and Fishtowners alike believe American is in decline, but unlike Fishtowners, Belmonsters in their enclaves have walled off the unpleasantness.

There are other commonalities. Both groups see decline as a result of external and uncontrollable—nearly inevitable—forces, with “globalization” being first among these; Fishtowners feel crushed by them, Belmonsters feel their prosperity is a reward for their ability to adapt to them. In some measure, these attitudes reflect the fact that both groups have come to measure their lives in material terms. The two candidates in this regard embody the zeitgeist: Trump believes his successes in business entitle him to political power; Hillary that her political clout entitles her to riches. Both are likewise content with identity-group politics: Hillary with the feminist-unions-black-Latino-gay congeries of interests that comprise the “Obama coalition,” Trump with fomenting the emerging “white-nationalist-alt-right” consciousness that has arisen in opposition. And, as the September 7 “Commander-In-Chief Forum” revealed, both Clinton and Trump evince deep ambiguity about the purposes and efficacy of American power in the world; the most contentious but ultimately minuscule divide between the two was over who would do the least to

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secure U.S. interests in the Middle East and who had been first to sour on the Iraq invasion.

In sum, our political conversation is being reduced to a debate about what kind of “Little England” is best for the United States to emulate: a nationalist and nativist version that would wall out the rest of the world or a Davos Man version whose walls keep out the homegrown riff-raff. Trump and Clinton each seeks to win the White House by energizing an identity-group base rather than by engaging the citizenry as a whole; neither seeks to speak to both Fish-town and Belmont in search of a common good. The battle is thus being waged by inflating opponents’ “negatives”—of which there are plenty to work with. An America in decline is like “a bone thrown between two dogs,” with Trump and Clinton tearing at scraps.

The bone-for-dogs line, by the way, came from a letter to William Cecil, Baron Burghley, Queen Elizabeth I’s principal adviser for most of her 45 years on the throne. It was speaking primarily of England’s international position—the two dogs were France, England’s traditional enemy, and Habsburg Spain, under Philip II making a “bid for mastery” of Europe and intent upon countering the Protestant Reformation and restoring Catholic primacy throughout Christendom. In ways not dissimilar from 21st-century Declinist America, 16th-century England had reached a low ebb, a fallen imperial power riven by domestic dissent and disorder, driven from its toehold in Europe, governed by an arthritic elite, and unsure which threat from abroad was most menacing.

But what is also salient about the later Elizabethan era is that it was a time of renewal, of decline reversed. It may have something to tell us not only about ourselves, for it was the primordial soup from which emerged English-speaking America, but also something about what it takes to escape a downward national spiral.

## THE ELIZABETHAN NADIR

In 1558, Elizabeth Tudor inherited the English crown from her half-sister Mary, whose turbulent five years on the throne left her known to history as “Bloody Mary.” Mary’s efforts to return England to the Catholic faith had been both tireless and merciless, but all that she had achieved in her short reign was domestic division; leading Protestants recanted their faith, fled to Holland, or risked being burned at the stake. Mary’s marriage to

Philip II of Spain had subsumed England’s strategic interests to those of Spain, sparking war with France. One of Elizabeth’s first acts as queen was to sign the treaty terminating the war, which deprived England of Calais, its last outpost on the European mainland.

A second greeting for the new queen was the publication of John Knox’s *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, arguing that rule by females contravened the Bible; Knox was no fringe figure but at the forefront of the Presbyterian “kirk” in Scotland. Elizabeth could not marry for either love or statecraft: to marry an Englishman would have caused domestic discord; to

marry a European prince, be he Protestant or Catholic, would embroil England in the wars of the Counter-Reformation. On the other hand, ruling as a “Virgin Queen” meant she would have no direct heir, risking a replay of the Wars of the Roses to determine the English succession.

In the late 1550s and 1560s, Elizabeth’s writ did not extend much beyond the south of England and was very much at issue in the north of England, the homeland of the most powerful feudal barons and a hotbed of the “Old Religion.” North of the border—and the border region between England and Scotland was constantly terrorized by raiding “reivers”—Scotland was divided, as well. The southern lowlands

had become stoutly Protestant and Presbyterian, while the Highlands remained staunchly independent and Catholic. Moreover, the “Queen of Scots,” Mary, had a claim to the English throne and had been the queen consort during the brief reign of her boy-husband, Francis II of France; she was from the powerful Guise family, the head of the militantly Catholic party in Paris. Mary had a genius for intrigue, constantly scheming with English Catholics, Scottish nobles, emissaries of the pope, and French diplomats—few could resist her charms—to supplant Elizabeth, to the point where, finally, in 1587 Mary was executed for treason.

Elizabeth also was queen of Ireland, although the power of the government in Dublin extended only through the surrounding Pale. Much of the island was ruled feudally by the “Old English,” Catholic nobles who were the descendants of the Anglo-Norman conquerors of the 12th century, while the more remote provinces of Ulster and much of Munster were still subject to Gaelic Irish clan leaders. If the Scots were prone to subversion through their “Auld Alliance” with the French, the Irish—especially the Ulstermen—gravitated toward Spain.



Elizabeth I in her coronation robes, 1559

Things were in worse shape outside Britain. The lowlands of Atlantic Europe had long been a strategic concern for English rulers: These were the jumping-off points for invasions, and the loss of Calais deprived Elizabeth of a “sally-port” for projecting power and influence there. Fortunately France, the traditional foe, was embroiled in her own religious conflicts. But the tides of those wars ebbed and flowed, and there was always a danger that a victory by the Guise faction would lead to a pan-Catholic alliance with Habsburg Spain. This was Lord Burghley’s strategic nightmare. Spain had become not just an aspiring European hegemon and, as the driving force of Counter-Reformation, an ideological foe, but also a northwestern European menace in its efforts to suppress a vigorous—and energetically Protestant—Dutch rebellion. Finally, having smugly refused to sponsor Christopher Columbus’s voyages, England found itself many decades behind the Iberians (in 1580 Philip II also came to the Portuguese throne) in exploiting the opportunities of riches in “the Indies,” both east and west. It was these colonial riches that were fueling Philip’s bid for European mastery.

Elizabeth not only inherited a deflated empire but an empty purse and a debilitated state. The greatness of her father’s court and military had been purchased by the confiscation of church property, a method of finance that could not be repeated. Some of Henry VIII’s defense investments, such as coastal fortifications and an ocean-going navy, had residual benefits. But English militias had neither the capacity or capability to go toe-to-toe with Philip’s *tercios*, the most professional and best-equipped troops in Europe. In sum: England in 1558 was poor; it was bitterly divided domestically, both politically and religiously; it was unable to control its “near abroad,” not just in Europe but in Britain itself; internationally it had become a lesser power, buffeted by the storms of both Reformation and Counter-Reformation. In every way, a bone for dogs.

## THE ELIZABETHAN RENAISSANCE

**O**n March 30, 1603, Hugh O’Neill, the charismatic earl of Tyrone in Ulster, arrived at Mellifont Abbey north of Dublin, to formally surrender his forces and renounce his nine years’ rebellion against English rule in Ireland. The English commander,

Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, kept Tyrone on his knees for over an hour, whence he declared “his humble submission” far “eclipsed” his past “vainglory.” The earl returned the next day to renew his petition and to sign a written vow of loyalty and request for clemency. But Elizabeth could not hear Tyrone’s plea; she had fallen into a “settled and unmovable melancholy,” passing away in her sleep in the early hours of March 24. The England she departed had changed in almost every respect. As Pope Sixtus V had snorted, Elizabeth was “only a woman, mistress of only half an island,” but “she makes herself feared by Spain, by France, by the [Holy Roman] Empire, by all.” To her people, she was “Gloriana.”



*Elizabeth’s Armada Portrait,’ 1588*

In her time, she had become (albeit somewhat reluctantly) the leader of a global “Protestant interest” that had checked Philip’s hegemonic ambitions, kept a Dutch Republic alive, and defended the “liberties”—that is to say, the balance of power—of Europe. In 1604 Spain would make peace with England and five years later sue the Dutch for a truce. English domestic politics had stabilized and her chosen successor, James Stuart of Scotland—the child of Mary, Queen of Scots—was welcomed as the legitimate heir to the Tudor

crown. Elizabeth had, by clever and determined leadership, “settled” and “by law established” an Anglican church that preserved an episcopal hierarchy yet accommodated a “bottom-up,” pluralistic, and Calvinist spirit, fostered through great universities that equally infused English life with a burst of the humanism of the Renaissance, a spirit that had faded from continental Europe. Politically, her government had tamed baronial power and initiated state reforms; she had chosen and nurtured statesmen like Burghley, who came from the “middling” classes of the gentry and earned their places by merit and loyalty. The English military had been improved beyond measure; not only had English naval forces—both the small “Royal Navy” and the larger body of private warships—begun to rule the waves, but the land forces had been professionalized and learned the art of fighting in coalition with continental allies.

The queen had also proved to be an astonishingly gifted politician. She and her ministers had managed their Parliaments with great skill and, in good measure by mastering the arts of propaganda, led a larger and broader “political nation” that cheered on Elizabeth’s expanding imperial project—and supported it through increasing taxation.



The rest of Britain, too, had been stabilized. There was a friendly regime in Edinburgh, and the French had lost influence in Scotland. The Scottish kirk and the Anglican church, despite disagreements over governance and structure, shared Calvinist doctrine. Mountjoy had driven the Spanish out of Ireland, hunted Tyrone's forces into extinction, and coopted the nobles to his cause. Zealous "New English" Protestant colonists, such as the poet Edmund Spenser, built "plantations" in what had been exclusively Gaelic counties. Further, through alliance with the Dutch and sponsorship of the Bourbon Henri IV in France, Elizabeth had made England again an arbiter of the European great-power balance. That the once-Huguenot Henri had found "Paris worth a mass" and converted did little damage to the larger geopolitical Protestant interest; he and his successors remained resolutely anti-Spanish. And finally, English adventurers had pushed out across the oceans, beginning to compete in a fully global way, including the planting of an initial colony in mid-Atlantic America. Sir Francis Drake's 1577-1580 circumnavigation was more than a voyage of exploration or even plunder—it was a statement of strategic intent.

In sum, in the span of her 45 years of rule, Elizabeth had reversed the course of English decline. The term "Great Britain" was in wide circulation, if not yet in legal form. While the term "Elizabethan Renaissance" was an invention of late Victorian scholars—and thus not very popular nowadays—it does capture the sense of vitality that permeated English life, culture, and politics in the second half of the 16th century.

## ELEMENTS OF ELIZABETHAN RENEWAL

And it is fair to say that Renaissance ideas had a profound influence on England's renewal, even if these ideas were filtered through an English and northwest European sensibility and driven by the energy of the Reformation. The resulting amalgam imbued Elizabethans with a powerful sense of purpose; both domestically and internationally, it was their task to civilize the uncivilized and to realize God's providential design for humanity. This was a kind of "Calvinist consensus" that did much to provide ideological cohesion for what was a diverse and already composite kingdom, and an inherently inclusive model of empire, one based in increasing proportion on shared ideas rather than shared blood; participatory Protestantism begat participatory politics.

At times the queen feared the "republicanism" and anti-hierarchical tendencies of her most devout subjects; beyond her natural strategic caution she also worried that too close a connection with the Dutch—who several times offered her their crown—would undermine the order of English

society. The vocal, proto-Puritan leaders in Parliament were a persistent pain, especially on the subjects of her marriage and the succession. Nevertheless, while always preserving her divine monarchical rights in principle, she understood the people as the enduring source of her power, and she never missed an opportunity to show her love. Begged by Parliament to take a husband and secure the regime, she replied: "Now that the Public Care of governing the Kingdom is laid upon me, to draw upon me also the Cares of marriage may seem a point of inconsiderate Folly. Yea, to satisfy you, I have already joined myself in marriage to an Husband, namely, the Kingdom of England." She embraced a growing and engaged political nation.

This is to say that the Elizabethan revival was unthinkable without Elizabeth. She is an elusive and mercurial figure but by any standard a political genius. She was also a formidable intellect and an energetic student, especially of languages and of governing. She tamed the great dukes and earls, the local warlords who had for so long been the bane of English kings, finally bringing them under central control; she promoted the careers of competent administrators such as Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham, who ran her intelligence networks with ruthless effectiveness; she also managed to make a mature politician out of her once-foppish favorite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. While her court was far from a centralized government in the modern sense, she did make continuous reforms and empowered her subordinates and, on occasion, even her military commanders.

The queen and her confidants also mastered what today might be called the art of the long-term view. This is not to say that her tactics were consistent—indeed, she sometimes lived up to the complaints made about the changeability of her sex—but that, in both domestic and international affairs, she maintained a strategic design. It is perhaps anachronistic but enlightening to imagine the Elizabethans thinking in terms of a "regime" rather than a "dynasty"; what they created was designed to survive a succession of line as well as individual ruler—and despite the best efforts of the Stuart family, it worked fairly well.

Elizabethans also were open to reforms of political economy, even though these, too, posed risks to the established aristocratic order. Already, the English economy was tied to the woolens trade and the markets of Europe. And much of the growth in the political nation reflected the wealth and influence of London financiers and the merchant class more generally. Lacking the fertility of France or the bullion of Spain, Englishmen tended to adopt economic principles like those of the Dutch, and wealth based on maritime trade demanded not only naval power but also a favorable balance of power along the western European littoral.

In many ways, the habits of the Elizabethan political mind were on plainest display as they approached the challenges of planting colonies in America. From the start, the Elizabethans imagined that the new world would be a place for “new England”—societies fundamentally like theirs and linked into an “Atlantic world,” where oceans were highways of exchange, not isolating moats. Thus the propaganda of colonialism was where Elizabethans expressed their ideas of utopia. In 1584, Richard Hakluyt, a prolific collector of works of exploration and occasionally one of Walsingham’s intelligence agents, produced a memorandum for Elizabeth in support of Sir Walter Raleigh’s project for a “Virginia” colony. In Hakluyt’s telling, strategic, military, and economic good sense combined with a transcendent moral purpose:

The Spaniards govern in the Indies with all pride and tyranny; and like as when people of contrary nature at the sea enter into gallies, where men are tied as slaves, all yell and cry with one voice, *Liberta, liberta*, as desirous of liberty and freedom, so no doubt whensoever the Queen of England, a prince of such clemency, shall seat upon that firm of America, and shall be reported throughout all that tract to use the natural people there with all humanity, courtesy, and freedom, they will yield themselves to her government, and revolt clean from the Spaniard.

A few final words should be said about the means by which Elizabethan England transformed itself from a bone for dogs into a top-dog position: It was an exercise in the cultivation of hard power, and a hard lesson for the queen personally. Not only did military forces and fighting seem like wasteful endeavors to an impoverished and parsimonious queen, they required her to take a back seat to men, and the most ambitious ones at that—men who, like her later favorite, the Earl of Essex, might attempt a coup. Her initial instincts were to try to increase England’s influence through diplomacy or dynastic connections, the 16th-century equivalents of “smart power.” But, matched against Spain’s treasure and armies, these failed to achieve the desired effect; Philip pursued his desire to dominate and re-Catholicize Europe relentlessly. Elizabeth then resorted to halfway measures, what in modern argot would be described as “public-private partnerships” but then were known as “letters of marque” or, less elegantly, piracy.

But the tension between national strategy and the profit motive—including the queen’s share of the doings—limited the strategic efficacy even as it limited the cost. By the mid-1580s, with Philip building his *Gran Armada* and his generals laying waste to the Dutch, Elizabeth was forced to spend her “chested treasure,” the funds she had been husbanding for a decade, and appeal to Parliament for additional monies to pay for a “militarized” foreign policy.

For the rest of her life, English forces regularly fought on multiple, simultaneous fronts: in Flanders, France, Ireland (the most expensive campaigns of all), the English Channel, the Mediterranean, the open Atlantic, and the Caribbean. She proved herself as a queen at war.

## POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS

That neither the Elizabethans nor their inheritors could realize their utopias (as Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* sardonically dramatized) was less important to their renewal than the fact that such ideas mattered, that they gave a purpose to the exercise of power. While it is impossible to show causation or to quantify the effect of Elizabethans’ political aspirations, it is likewise difficult to imagine how they might have halted their decline—let alone reversed it—absent such aspirations.

At the core of their political purposes was a faith in a transcendent and divine reality. God was watching and might intervene in human affairs; certainly he was judging. While human acts were no guarantee of salvation, it was supremely important to search for signs of God’s providence and fulfill God’s design. God’s design encompassed all humanity, even those not yet civilized, not yet Christian, not yet Protestant. The outcome may have been predestined by God, but it was not for man to say that some of his fellows were so deplorable as to be irredeemable. Nor was man to isolate himself from others, but rather to engage with and evangelize them to the truth.

To be sure, what gave the Elizabethans vitality and confidence often inured them to their own brutality; if they were occasionally misty-eyed about the transcendent purposes of their quest for power, they were entirely dry-eyed in the exercise of power. But as Spenser, a colonist of Ireland as well as a genius English poet, wrote, such “necessity” was inevitable given the fallen nature of man:

Even by the sword, for all those evils must first be cut away by a strong hand before any good can be planted, like as the corrupt branches and unwholesome boughs are first to be pruned and the foul moss cleansed and scraped away before the tree can bring forth any good fruit.

So if decline is reversible and not inevitable, neither is the road out of decline an easy one. For the Elizabethans, it was a long, punishing journey that had only been begun in the queen’s 45-year reign. Their aspirations mixed regularly with their anxieties.

But if there is any enduring lesson in the Elizabethan experience, it may be this: Only with aspirations can the anxieties be mastered, let alone excused or justified. National decline is, first and foremost, a symptom of lost purpose rather than lost power. ♦



# The Original Deplorables

*Obama misunderstands populism*

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

**T**he president was irritated, and it showed. This was back in June, and he was answering questions from the press, something he normally does with near-insouciance. So why was he peeved on this occasion? Well, there was all this talk of “populism.”

“Maybe somebody can pull up in a dictionary quickly the phrase ‘populism,’” the president said, “but I’m not prepared to concede the notion that some of the rhetoric that’s been popping up is ‘populist.’”

The clear implication was that “the phrase ‘populism’” was something of value and that it was being hijacked by certain bad actors on the political stage. The name Donald Trump was not mentioned but it surely did come to mind.

The president went on to suggest that perhaps *he* should be considered a populist, saying his career in “public service,” his concern for “[kids] in America” and the poor were proof, concluding, “I suppose that makes me a populist.”

He then rambled on: “Somebody else who has never shown any regard for workers, has never fought on behalf of social justice issues or making sure that poor kids are getting a decent shot at life . . . they don’t suddenly become a populist because they say something controversial in order to win votes.

“That’s not the measure of populism. That’s nativism or xenophobia or worse. Or it’s just cynicism. So, I would just advise everybody to be careful about suddenly attributing to whoever pops up at a time of economic anxiety the label that they’re populists.”

The surprising thing here wasn’t the display of presidential spleen but the fact that he seemed to think it a desirable thing in politics to be called a populist. It wasn’t that long ago that for someone with Barack Obama’s faculty lounge pedigree, the word would conjure up images of blustering politicians wearing wrinkled shirts with half moons

of sweat around the armpits, bellowing angry simplicities at crowds of rubes, rednecks, and racists. The kind of people, in short, you would expect to find clinging to their guns and their religion, to borrow one of the president’s more celebrated locutions.

And that, in fact, is largely the historical character of American populism. If there were a Mount Rushmore of populist heroes, the faces carved into the rock—all looking very angry—would be those of Andrew Jackson, William Jennings Bryan, Huey P. Long, and George Wallace.

Not the sort of fraternity that Barack Obama or just about any good, modern Democrat would want to belong to—and vice versa.

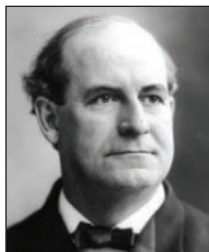
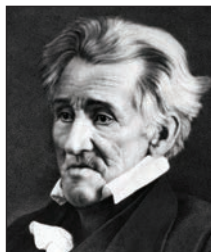
But this election year, the populist cause has been rehabilitated. One reads, for example, in the *Wall Street Journal* that in the 2016 campaign, “populism’s moment has arrived. After years of tough economic times, candidates are especially focused on ‘the little guy’—or at least the littler guy.”

And the *Washington Post* discovers a “wave of authoritarian populists whose support has swelled in many Western democracies.”

And NPR notices, “Populism is one of the most important forces in American politics today. Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump have both tapped into widespread frustrations against the elites and the establishment.”

And since inquiring minds want to know, the *Economist* asks: *Is Donald Trump a populist?*

You can’t read much about the campaign or the state of American politics without running across some mention—or even an elaborate discussion—of populism and its history and meaning. The history is knowable, but the meaning is a little trickier. Which accounts for why NPR can assign the description to both Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, two candidates who would seem to have nothing in common other than bad haircuts. But perhaps this is because populism has historically been more an emotional cause—a crusade, even—than a coherent set of political positions. It has always tested high on passion, while struggling to articulate actual policies and programs. Its moments of maximum influence have occurred when times are hard for a slice of



*Bona fide populists Jackson, Bryan . . .*

*Geoffrey Norman, a writer in Vermont, is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

the population, while elites of one sort or another prosper and preen. It is fueled by resentment and a sense that the fix is in. The people at the top have too much power and too much money and didn't come by it fairly. They are robber barons, perhaps. Or pointy-headed intellectuals. Or, currently, the "1 percent." They lay up for themselves treasures on Wall Street while people on Main Street struggle and, in the case of the recent economic rout, lose their homes. They close the factories where Main Streeters work and move the jobs to Mexico while earning hefty commissions on the paperwork.

**B**ut this is getting ahead of the discussion. Though the president pretended not to know of it, there is a populist tradition. And an appreciation and understanding of American political history suggests we are living through one of those populist moments. It has been building for some time and may have a significant impact on this election and beyond. Or it could fizzle, as others have in the past.

For now, though, American populism seems a topic very much worth considering. The word should not, one thinks, be applied to just any old third-party or renegade seeker of office simply because he calls himself a populist. It doesn't advance our understanding to argue that, say, Ralph Nader is some kind of populist, even if he put together the semblance of a party by that name and, in 2004, ran for president under its banner in several states. For Nader, it was a flag of convenience. He was a spoiler, no doubt about that. (His contribution to the 2000 election and its disputed aftermath will make him forever one of the great spoilers of American politics.) But Nader could never make the necessary visceral connection with heartland voters boiling over with resentment at the elites out of the exclusive colleges running things to their own benefit. Those voters would more likely consider Nader one of the hated "them" than a leader who would take it to the foe in Washington.

Or what about George McGovern, who was sometimes called the Prairie Populist? It helped that he was, indeed, from the prairie, where the modern version of American populism established its roots. That was in the late 19th century when something called the Farmers' Alliance was born of frustration over the high prices railroads charged farmers for moving crops and the low prices those crops then fetched. The name changed, and the Alliance became the People's party. It was also known as the Populist party, and that name stuck around even after the party disappeared when the Democrats found a natural-born leader and orator to champion its causes.

With his "Cross of Gold" speech, William Jennings Bryan became the great mobilizing figure of populism and the presidential nominee of the Democratic party (in 1896,

and again in 1900 and 1908). While he lost three presidential elections, his issues and causes survived and, in many cases, triumphed with the election of Woodrow Wilson. Populism in those days was a crusade of farmers and small merchants against the unholy forces of oppression—namely, the banks, the railroads, and hard money and tight credit, in the form of the gold standard. A populist crusader named Mary Lease supposedly rallied farmers to the cause by telling them they should "raise less corn and more hell."

But if progressives like Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson did rein in the "malefactors of great wealth," they would have vehemently rejected being called populist. The populist movement was too much a thing of the frontier and too anti-intellectual for them. They had nothing especially against elites, which is understandable, since they were nothing if not from the upper crust themselves. They were progressives who believed that the common man was not especially wise. But his condition could be made better by government run by . . . well, by *them*. It's hard to imagine either Roosevelt or Wilson getting all sentimental about the virtues and native wisdom of the common folk, who were, after all, just farmers and merchants from forlorn places like South Dakota, where George McGovern came from and where he, no doubt, was exposed to the populist sensibility.

McGovern was certainly not inclined to regard big political men as great and wise leaders. Not when his rise to national prominence was fueled by his hatred of the war in Vietnam, which had been engineered by an elite from the best schools and presided over by the most domineering, forceful president since Teddy Roosevelt. If one looks for a case of the common people suffering at the expense of the elites, then this would be it, in purest form. The sons of the poor drafted in an undeclared war run by men whose own children went off to college to read books, smoke dope, and enjoy the advent of the sexual revolution.

But while McGovern's visceral and honorable opposition to the war was unquestionably anti-elitist, there were gaps in his populist résumé. He lacked the pervasive sense of anger and the appetite for payback. He was, basically, a decent liberal of generally sunny disposition. He was missing the hate chromosome.

The legendary populists had this. For Huey P. Long, hate served as a kind of adrenaline, driving him to the excesses for which he was famous. He hated the rich, especially those made that way through inheritance. And he hated Standard Oil and all the big corporations who prospered, even through the Depression, while farmers and the working men endured and either lost hope or found some in Long's "Share the Wealth" vision.

George McGovern would have been uncomfortable

in Huey Long's presence. And Long would have found McGovern's campaign promise of a thousand-dollar grant to every taxpayer anemic and his personality boring.

And since he was fundamentally a decent and honorable man, George McGovern would have been repelled by the antisemitism that attached to the Share the Wealth program and its lead crusader, Gerald L. K. Smith.

This, in fact, is the great stain on populism, going back to the days of William Jennings Bryan and earlier. It may have been inevitable that the movement would be infected and cursed by the oldest of all the hatreds. The populists of the Midwest and prairie states in the last years of the nineteenth century were white Protestants, hostile to people who weren't like them. And they believed that foremost among their enemies and oppressors were ... the bankers. And we all know who runs the banks.

Some of the early populists went gladly down this ugly road. As, for instance, when E. Z. Ernst, a Kansas populist, made the case that "English capitalists" had somehow gained financial control over America, whose citizens were unaware they now had "Shylock's rope about their necks in preparation for the final execution."

This was pretty common fare in populist circles, which accounts for the popularity and influence of a tract called *Seven Financial Conspiracies Which Have Enslaved the American People*, first published in 1887. The author, Sarah Emery, employed a lot of crackpot numerology, conspiracy theorizing, and not-so-thinly veiled antisemitism (she, too, had a fondness for the name "Shylock") to account for the woes that were catalysts of populism. The book may have sold as many as 400,000 copies.

There was antisemitism attached to the early populist movement, and racism as well. Bryan himself had given a speech in defense of the KKK at the 1924 Democratic convention.

But as progressivism prospered, populism declined and, with Long's assassination, seemed a spent and marginal force. Without the kind of emotional—not to say "charismatic"—leaders that Long and Bryan had been, there was no populist movement. The movement depended on emotion more than reason and, thus, lost vitality and influence during the New Deal and the Second World War. Populism might depend on the passions of the common man and his resentment of elites, but it needed leaders and did not seem to breed them. They sprang up and seized on the anger of people who eventually fell in behind them. Both Bryan and Long blazed onto

the political stage at relatively young ages, and both rose very quickly. But while they had many followers, there weren't any understudies to take their places. And this was, according to enlightened thought, a good thing. The widespread prosperity following World War II also took the edge off the anger that had been populism's rocket fuel. Times were good—or good enough—and people had money. Presumably, the bankers had been defeated along with the fascists.

By the fifties, populism had been reduced to material for academic study. It was a crucial element in Richard Hofstadter's exceedingly influential take on American political history. Hofstadter won two Pulitzers, and his essay "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" never seems to go out of style. Perhaps because it explains that the dark night of fascism is always descending on America (though, as Tom Wolfe's rejoinder had it, seems always to fall on Europe).

Hofstadter made the populists intellectually relevant

by arguing that their antisemitism and conspiratorial view of the world had somehow made Joe McCarthy possible. He laid the foundation of this argument on what he called the "agrarian myth," explaining, "The utopia of the Populists was in the past, not in the future. According to the agrarian myth, the health of the state was proportionate to the degree to

which it was dominated by the agricultural class, and this assumption pointed to the superiority of an earlier age."

So, "The agrarian myth encouraged farmers to believe that they were not themselves an organic part of the whole order of business enterprise and speculation that flourished in the city ... but rather the innocent pastoral victims of a conspiracy hatched in the distance." This "notion of an innocent and victimized populace colors the whole history of agrarian controversy, and indeed the whole history of the populist mind."

Suspicion of city boys morphed into hatred of them and the "paranoid style," so you could draw a line from William Jennings Bryan and Sarah Emery straight to McCarthy and what intellectuals like Hofstadter and those who read and quoted him believed was a climate of fear.

The argument was exceedingly influential and would seem to have driven a stake through the heart of populism as a plausible political movement. What politician would want to run as leader of the nation's paranoids? Populism was a term of opprobrium, and when it was attached to any living American political figure, he would most likely be from the South and a raging racist, the prototype of whom was Tom Watson of Georgia, who had been an early leader in the Farmers' Alliance. In those days, he was something



... Long, Wallace ...



of a liberal on matters of race; he had even, in one of his campaigns, personally stood up to a mob intent on lynching a black man. He ran for president in the 1904 and 1908 elections, as candidate of the Populist party. But by then, he was an out-and-out white supremacist who would celebrate—in a newspaper he published—the lynching of a man named Leo Frank who “happened” to be a Jew.

He was also fiercely opposed to immigration. When he wrote, “We have become the world’s melting pot,” it was not to celebrate the fact. “The scum of creation has been dumped on us,” he continued. “Some of our principal cities are more foreign than American.”

There were other Southern politicians to whom the populist label was attached. Not all of them racists—at least not of the Watson temperament. George Wallace, after all, began his political odyssey as something of a moderate on race. And then there was the man who preceded him, Jim Folsom. “Big Jim” or “Kissing Jim,” as he was known by his followers in Alabama.

Folsom was a sort of big-hearted rube who knew how to touch all the right buttons with the common folk. Folsom was moderate enough on race that he had Harlem congressman Adam Clayton Powell over for a drink at the governor’s mansion in Montgomery. He was also against the poll tax and generally for the things a good populist should be. He drank like a fish and loved the ladies, which accounted for many of the “colorful” anecdotes about him. Like the one about how he was warned that his political enemies were trying to snare him in a scandal by getting him drunk and then sending a temptress to seduce him. “Boys,” Folsom is supposed to have replied, “let me tell you something. If you’re fishing for Big Jim with that kind of bait, you’re going to catch him every time.”

He was populism’s best face in those times but was too crude and corrupt to be taken seriously. He couldn’t supply much juice to the paranoid streak in American life that Hofstadter and other intellectuals and academics saw as the great American menace. Coming, of course, from the right.

**B**ut as populism was being marginalized by events and scholars, the conditions for its resurrection were germinating, and they would flower on both the left and right.

The landslide election of Lyndon Johnson seemed to have settled it. The right—paranoid and otherwise—had its chosen candidate in Barry Goldwater, and he had been humiliated. The only speck on an otherwise clear horizon for the left were the showings that George Wallace had made in a few primaries. But this could be written off as racism.

Four years later, Johnson was done. Wallace was again winning primaries, and Richard Nixon was putting together what he would come to call a “silent majority.” Populism was making a comeback, even if no notable politician was actually calling himself a populist.

In 1972, Wallace again rolled up impressive scores in primaries outside the South in a campaign fueled more by resentment of elites than by straight-up racism. He was the man to fight the common man’s battles. But his campaign ended when he was shot and crippled.

McGovern became the Democratic candidate. And when *Time* put him on the cover and called him “the Prairie Populist,” it was not meant as a putdown. He was crusading against the war, as William Jennings Bryan had against America’s entry into World War I. And he was the candidate of the common man, the foe of the powerful and unaccountable.

Nixon, whom none would ever call a populist, was politically crafty enough to realize that resentments are fine fuel for a campaign. He couldn’t plausibly run against Washington so he stood for that “silent majority” of his against the elites in the media, the arts, the academy, and similar enclaves. One of Nixon’s close advisers, Pat Buchanan, understood these resentments and how to play them. They were at the center of his political thinking and his world view, and he did not come by his understanding of this version of populist anger and his facility in playing on it by diligent study. It was in his blood.

With the economic dislocations of the 1970s—the OPEC oil shocks, the inflation, the recessions—the conditions for a new populist moment in America looked ripe. But it took a while to bear fruit. There was the Carter presidency, which came as reaction to Nixon and Watergate and left no lasting political imprint. Then there was Reagan, whose political grasp and wide appeal conquered all. He made populism irrelevant, much as Theodore Roosevelt had in his day. But the spirit was there, and it became flesh in 1992.

If there has ever been an ideal oppositional figure for a populist crusade, it would have to be George H. W. Bush. He was, as we have learned and begun to acknowledge, a good president and a good man. But he was to the manor born and not especially adroit with the common touch. He looked and talked like an American aristocrat, to the extent there is such a thing. Perhaps this is because he is one. But he came across as fussy. Even prissy. The kind of fellow who, as they said in Texas, “would step out of the shower to pee.” There was even talk of a “wimp factor,” which was especially absurd. He was flying torpedo planes in the Pacific when he wasn’t old enough to vote and had to be pulled from the



... and Buchanan.

sea on one occasion when his Avenger was shot down.

Still, he was a perfect foil for two candidates running campaigns that were routinely described as “populist.” One of them credibly; the other not. More noise was made, and attention garnered, by the less plausible populist. That would be H. Ross Perot.

The main objective of Perot’s campaign was, plainly, to deny Bush a second term. And the motive for this was part ambition and part pure bile. Perot had a very high opinion of his own abilities. He’d made a fortune after all, and there wasn’t anything anyone could teach him or anything he needed to learn. He also seems to have hated Bush for reasons that were never made clear.

Perot was talked of and written about as an “outsider,” and he made this the crux of his campaign. The people in Washington were all connected and motivated by self-interest. It would take an “outsider” like him to fix things. That was the extent of his appeal to the spirit of populism. Still, he was treated as such by many in the media.

Perot got 19 percent of the vote. The most of any third-party candidate since Theodore Roosevelt’s 27 percent running on the Bull Moose ticket in 1912. He may, or may not, have cost Bush reelection, just as Roosevelt torpedoed Taft.

But it was another candidate who was the true populist running that year. He didn’t get the votes or the degree of attention that went Perot’s way, but unlike Perot, he didn’t drift slowly from the political arena, leaving no footprints.

Pat Buchanan also ran against Bush that year. But not in the general election. He challenged Bush in the Republican primaries and not from personal pique or vanity (well, maybe a little) but from pure conviction. He was the populist alternative to the establishment. The blue-collar challenger to the Brooks Brothers set. He had worked to exploit the cultural fault line between elites and the common people when he was with Nixon. He had worked for Reagan. He had written books and newspaper columns arguing for a Republican party that understood and exploited the divide, a party that would secure the loyalty of the working-class Reagan Democrats.

This was not happening, and wouldn’t happen, with Bush in the White House and mainstream figures like Bob Dole and Bob Michel in the party’s congressional leadership. Buchanan didn’t come up with the line about how Bob Dole served as the “tax collector for the welfare state.” That was Newt Gingrich. But Buchanan would certainly have agreed with it.

He put a scare into Bush in New Hampshire and exposed the incumbent’s vulnerability, which Bill Clinton and Perot would go on to exploit in the general election. But

Buchanan remained a loyal Republican and was given the opportunity to make a prime-time speech at the convention that renominated Bush. It became known as the “culture war” speech.

“There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America,” Buchanan said. “It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself.”

Bush lost, of course. And Buchanan would probably now say, almost 25 years later, that the cultural war was lost as well. But not because Buchanan didn’t fight.

He was back in New Hampshire for the 1996 primary. The speech he gave announcing his candidacy was pure populism and, as political speeches go, a thing of beauty, with phrasing as arresting as anything that came from the mouth of William Jennings Bryan:

[W]e have a government . . . that does not listen anymore to the forgotten men and women who work in the forges and factories and plants and businesses of this country. We have, instead, a government that is too busy taking the phone calls from lobbyists for foreign countries and the corporate contributors of the Fortune 500.



*But Obama? Nah.*

That is one-hundred-proof populism, and if Buchanan never got to the White House, he left a big footprint on the political landscape traveled by those who still might, including Donald Trump, who has appropriated Buchanan’s anti-free-trade, anti-immigrant, America first themes even as he is tone deaf to the music.

Buchanan, the candidate, was the real populist deal, right down to an antisemitic taint noted by, among others, William F. Buckley Jr. and, writing in this magazine, Norman Podhoretz. But it wasn’t the source of his passion, which was for an older, better time of stable families, orderly neighborhoods, factory jobs that paid so well that a man could raise a family and his wife could stay at home. In short, the America of the 1950s, back before NAFTA and feminism and . . . well, just about everything.

Populism is a kind of nostalgic longing for what, perhaps, never really was and fury at what is. For it to thrive, it isn’t necessary that times should be especially awful. We are not in a depression now. Or even a recession, for that matter. What does seem essential is a widespread belief that things are not likely to get better, except for a few who don’t especially deserve it and might even be responsible for the malaise.

President Obama’s pique, then, was misplaced. He isn’t a populist, but he has done a lot to make the revival of populism an undeniable and troubling reality. What George H.W. Bush was to Pat Buchanan, he is to Donald Trump. And that has to hurt. ♦



Julia Child presents a salade niçoise (1978).

# Bon Appétit, America

*How the French Chef captured the zeitgeist.*

BY AMY HENDERSON

In 2006, Julia Child's memoir *My Life in France* was a rousing best-seller. The story of how a "6-foot-2-inch, 36-year-old, rather loud and unserious Californian" (her words) transformed herself and America's appetites was a sheer delight. But it nearly didn't happen. For years she had talked about writing a memoir of her postwar years in Paris, and her grandnephew, journalist Alex Prud'homme, kept gently nudging her. Finally, in 2003, she confessed to him that she had not begun to write, and said, "All right, dearie, maybe we *should* work on it together."

They worked on the book for eight months until Julia Child died in August

Amy Henderson is historian emerita of the National Portrait Gallery.

## The French Chef in America

*Julia Child's Second Act*

by Alex Prud'homme

Knopf, 336 pp., \$27.95

2004; Prud'homme spent the next year weaving interviews and an extensive archive of family letters into a memoir written in her voice. His aim was to make the reader feel "that we were sitting around a little café-table, having a glass of wine or a cup of coffee, and Julia was there telling you a story." In *The French Chef in America*, he continues Julia Child's life story from her debut as *The French Chef* on WGBH in Boston in 1963, through her "Second Act"—the next four decades that covered her tele-

vision heyday and the 17 cookbooks she wrote after publishing the first volume of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*.

The key to her success was her ebullient personality, but Julia Child always aimed at contemporary relevance as well. In the 1971-72 season of *The French Chef*, the 26 half-hour programs were "a refresher course for experienced cooks and ... a jet-assist takeoff for beginners." The next year was devoted to the "demands of society," including family dinners, unexpected company, and three-course sit-down dinners. Sadly, these decades were also marked by the illness of her husband Paul, who had been the "man who is always there: a true partner in her career as dishwasher, official photographer, mushroom dicer and onion chopper, editor,

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taster, idea man, and husband.” Heart surgery in 1974 deprived Paul of oxygen for too long, and he never regained his full mental abilities. To a teenager Alex Prud’homme visiting Aunt Julia, Paul Child seemed like a “grumpy old man.”

Child continued to include Paul in her life as much as possible, but she also poured her considerable energy into work. Writing *From Julia Child’s Kitchen*, she discovered that working on her own actually gave her “a new sense of freedom and purpose.” Published in 1975, it was her most personal cookbook, with each recipe presented as a class. Her voice was omnipresent, and each recipe included personal anecdotes and bits of advice “as if she were standing next to you, kibitzing.” Her mantra was “try new recipes, learn from your mistakes, be fearless, and above all have fun!”

Julia Child was in the forefront of the media ecosystem that emerged in the 1970s. Her personality made her a star in the new mass-marketing synergy that connected television, journalism, public relations, and Hollywood. Prud’homme suggests that her growing celebrity, Paul’s decline, and the publication of *From Julia Child’s Kitchen* marked a real transition in her life—the launch of her Second Act. From the mid-1970s on, she broke from classical French cuisine and explored foods from around the world, examined foods of her colonial forebears, and “intentionally re-Americanized herself.” At the age of 63, she “had at last [discovered] her true voice.”

Her new celebrity was memorably spoofed by Dan Aykroyd on *Saturday Night Live*. He gives her full credit for inspiring the Bass-O-Matic, but his 1978 parody is the true classic. Here, “Julia” demonstrates how to de-bone a chicken with a very sharp knife:

You cut along the backbone to the pope’s nose, like so—rrrrrraaAHHH-HH! Oh! Oh! *Now* I’ve done it. I’ve cut the *dickens* out of my finger!

As blood gushes, “Julia” explains, “Well, I’m glad, in a way, this has happened. We have never really discussed what to do. First, we must stop the bleeding.” Of course, the blood keeps

spurting and Julia grows woozier until she collapses onto the counter, finally saying, “I think I’m going to sleep now. *Bon appétit!*”

She continued on PBS with such series as *Julia Child & Company* and *Dinner at Julia’s*; she was also a guest on *The Tonight Show* and had a regular short segment on *Good Morning America* beginning in 1980. In 1993, she began her PBS series *Cooking with Master Chefs*, and in 1999-2000 partnered with Jacques Pépin in a series called *Cooking at Home*. Along the way, she continued to publish cookbooks.

Unlike *My Life in France*, *The French Chef in America* does not exactly bubble over with Julia’s personality. It is a straightforward biography of the last four decades of her life written

in Prud’homme’s journalistic voice. It covers the territory well, including her disgust with such late-20th-century food fads as *cuisine minceur* and *nouvelle cuisine*. She wasn’t a food snob, however, and “enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers, and French fries as much as the next person.”

Julia Child was clearly undaunted by age. Prud’homme writes that her mind remained sharp when they worked together in her 92nd, and final, year. She considered *My Life in France* “a sacred trust, a set of rules about the right way and wrong way to approach food” that she felt a duty to pass along. Her purpose was “to make cooking easy for people, so that they can enjoy it, and do it. . . . And it’s a civilized art, don’t you think?” ♦



# Stalin’s Second String

*Noel Field, the spy who stayed out in the cold.*

BY HARVEY KLEHR

Noel Field was never a very consequential spy. Unlike Alger Hiss or Larry Dugan, fellow Soviet agents in the State Department, he did not hold a policy-making position or have access to high-level information. He did his most significant damage to American and Western interests long after leaving government service, during and after World War II, when he ran the Unitarians’ relief efforts in Europe and operated without direct supervision from Soviet controllers. And yet, his fanatical devotion to communism led him to throw away not only his own life, but those of much of his immediate family, who faced years of imprisonment, torture, and misery from those forces for whom he worked. Hundreds

Harvey Klehr, the Andrew W. Mellon professor of politics and history at Emory, is the author, most recently, of *The Communist Experience in America: A Political and Social History*.

## True Believer

*Stalin’s Last American Spy*

by Kati Marton

Simon & Schuster, 304 pp., \$27

of devoted Communists were jailed, tortured, and many executed because of him. Even after Stalin’s death, when the absurd claims that Field and his wife, brother, and adopted daughter were all American spies were dropped by the Hungarian authorities, Noel Field refused to acknowledge that the cause that had inspired him had any fundamental flaws. He continued to lie about his own past and to protect his fellow Stalinists.

Kati Marton is uniquely situated to tell Field’s story. Her parents were Hungarian journalists, working for American wire services, who covered the 1949 purge trial that led to the execution of László Rajk, a high-ranking Hungarian Communist, on charges

that he had been recruited as an American spy by Field. Later arrested, Marton's father was interrogated by the same secret policeman who had questioned Field and occupied the same prison cell. After the Hungarian Revolution, Marton's parents, before fleeing to the West, became the first journalists to speak to Noel and his wife Herta. She has used Hungarian archives, the records and interviews of an earlier Field biographer, Flora Lewis, and, most important, Field family papers that document with remarkable clarity—and no equivocation—his fanaticism and service to communism.

Her unambiguous conclusion: His is a story of “blind faith,” an idealist turned “into a willing participant in murder,” and a man who betrayed his own family and country on behalf of a monstrous ideology.

Noel Field (1904-1970) was both a precocious student and committed pacifist from his youth. Born in Zurich to an American Quaker pacifist who cooperated with American intelligence in World War I, he was appalled by the slaughter and resolved to work for world peace. Entering Harvard shortly after his father's unexpected death in 1921, he graduated in only two years. Performing superbly on the written exam for the Foreign Service, he was judged socially immature but nevertheless hired and assigned to the Western European Division, where his work was admired. But he remained an outsider, living in an unfashionable neighborhood of Washington, socializing with blacks, reading Marx and Lenin, and searching for an alternate faith.

His wife, a former classmate from Switzerland, was utterly devoted to him, even though he had frequent affairs. The two of them pored over Marxist books sent by his mother; Noel feared that borrowing them from the library might compromise him at work. By 1928 he was emotionally a Communist, radicalized by the Sacco-Vanzetti case. When the Bonus Army descended on the capital in 1932, Field impulsively marched with them. In 1934, at the State Department, KGB agent Hede Massing recruited him for espionage; he decided it was his “honorable duty.”

She found him an impulsive and naïve romantic: After one evening meeting, Field ran up the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and belted out a rendition of the “Internationale” in Russian. At first, he only gave Massing oral reports; then he progressed to smuggling documents out of the State Department.

His close friend Alger Hiss tried to recruit him for his GRU circle, leading to an awkward encounter between Massing and Hiss, for which the former was rebuked by her KGB controller for poor tradecraft. The contacts had exposed Hiss, Larry Duggan, and Field to each other as Soviet agents. Marton wisely avoids rearguing the Hiss case, but notes the archival evidence from the former Soviet Union that has confirmed he was a spy and the unequivocal transcripts of Field's interrogation by Hungarian secret police where he identified Alger Hiss as a fellow spy.

By 1936, Field, isolated in the State Department because of his left-wing views, felt uncomfortable spying on his own country and took a job with the League of Nations in Switzerland, where he remained in contact with Soviet agents, even helping the KGB track down and kill Ignaz Reiss, his first Soviet contact in Europe, who had defected and was in a position to expose him.

The seeds of Field's later troubles lay in his initial KGB contacts: Massing, Reiss, and Walter Krivitsky all defected from Soviet intelligence in the 1930s and, despite his willingness to help KGB assassins, Field's connections to such “traitors” marked him as not fully reliable. Moreover, one of his tasks at the League of Nations was to assist in the repatriation of Communists who had fought with the International Brigades in Spain. They, too, were regarded as unreliable by Stalin, and many who later returned to their East European homelands after World War II were conveniently linked to Field as American agents.

Hired by the Unitarians to direct relief work in Marseille following the fall of France to the Nazis, Field devoted himself to saving Communist cadres and shunning “noisy” anti-

Communists. His biases were evident to other relief workers and agencies; the Unitarians turned a blind eye. He escaped to Switzerland in 1942 and made contact with his father's old friend Allen Dulles, now directing the Office of Strategic Services in occupied Europe. Dulles used Noel's contacts to funnel money and resistance fighters into Eastern Europe. When he finally reestablished contact with Moscow in 1943, Field was chastised for working with American intelligence; he was too naïve to realize that he was stoking Stalinist paranoia about potential traitors. Many of the men and women he aided were later purged as his fellow American spies.

With the end of the war, Field used the Unitarians' resources to return Communist exiles to their homelands, where they could implement his utopian dreams. Criticism mounted from his employers, and he brazenly lied, denying that he was either a Communist or a Soviet operative. (He privately wrote one Communist leader, in 1948, that he and his wife had been party members for 12 years; confusingly, he said in the same letter that they had joined while in Moscow in 1938.) He was fired in October 1947 after an investigation demonstrated that all the relief money he supervised went to Communists and Communist organizations.

At loose ends, Field became embroiled in American investigations of Soviet espionage. In 1948, Whitaker Chambers publicly named him as a Soviet agent in the State Department. Afraid to return to America, where he feared he would be drawn into the Hiss case, and unemployed in Switzerland, he naïvely hoped that some of those he had helped during the war—and presently in power in Eastern Europe—would assist him. But Stalin, now battling the Titoist heresy, had already decided to purge unreliable Communists, particularly those who had survived the war in Western Europe or fought in Spain, and concluded that Field—recruited by traitors, an associate of Allen Dulles, and a savior of suspect Communists—was the perfect centerpiece for a vast conspiracy theory.

Lured to Czechoslovakia to discuss



*Noel Field (1935)*

a teaching position, Field was arrested, turned over to the Hungarians, and brutally tortured until he confessed to recruiting 600 people to spy for the Americans. Dozens of those he fingered were murdered; many had never even heard of him until they were arrested and tortured. Although he never testified, defendants in the show trials that followed throughout Eastern Europe agreed that he had recruited them to spy for the United States.

Nor was Noel the only Field caught up in this drama. His wife Herta went to Prague to look for him and was arrested. His brother Hermann in Warsaw on a fruitless search for Noel was also picked up and held in solitary confinement. His foster daughter, Erica Glaser, traveled to East Germany to contact officials she knew in a desperate effort to find out what had happened—and was likewise arrested, tortured, and convicted of espionage. Sentenced to death, she was transferred to the Soviet Union and wound up in the Gulag, unable to communicate with her family for four years.

When a high-ranking Polish intelli-

gence chief defected in 1954 and revealed that the Field brothers, both American citizens, were still alive, American diplomats demanded their release. With Stalin dead and the Soviet Union pulling back from his excesses, Noel and Herta Field were released from prison and reunited. Noel cried when informed of Stalin's death; his first words to his wife were, "Have you remained true?"

Despite their release, the Fields remained under constant surveillance and restriction. Neither his own ordeal nor the cold-blooded murder of dozens of Communists because of his statements could shake Noel Field's loyalties—or his loathing for his own country. When the American ambassador visited the Fields, Noel complained about Joseph McCarthy's harassment of the State Department. After they requested political asylum in Hungary, the Fields became indignant when threatened with the loss of their American citizenship. Field tried to persuade his brother and foster daughter to remain in the Soviet bloc. He lectured them that he did

not "blame an entire people, a system or a government for the misdeeds of a handful of the overzealous and the misguided" and expressed disappointment that they were angry with him and the demonic ideology to which he clung.

The Hungarian government gave Noel a job—at a salary 10 times that of the average Hungarian—as an editor and translator at a journal, where he informed on his coworkers to the secret police. He became a member of the Hungarian Communist party in 1956, just before the system began to implode following Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. László Rajk was reburied with honors, his widow denounced the regime, and Mátyás Rákosi, the man who had orchestrated the trial and Field's role, was forced to flee to Moscow following riots. Noel Field obediently endorsed the Soviet invasion of Hungary and continued to believe that communism was the wave of the future.

Not content to have ruined his own life and his wife's, Noel's frequent anti-American diatribes in the mid-1950s



made Erica Glaser's life even harder. Freed from the Gulag in 1955, she was desperate to move to the United States to be with her husband, a former American soldier, and their two children. As an ex-Communist, she was barred from entering the country under the provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act. Even an affidavit from an ex-cellmate of the beatings and torture she had endured did not sway American bureaucrats, who insisted that there was no evidence she had actively opposed communism for the previous five years. Finally, the chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee took up her case, and she was allowed to emigrate in 1957. Erica Glaser made a new life as a teacher in Virginia; she refused ever to visit Noel Field. She sent him a copy of her anti-Communist memoir; he praised her writing but carefully avoided discussing politics.

Noel Field's fanaticism alienated virtually everyone with whom he had contact. His coworkers regarded him as an eccentric. In 1960, he wrote an article for an American Communist magazine calling Stalin's crimes "essential on the road to communism" and praising Soviet troops in Hungary as "freedom fighters." As the Prague Spring developed in Czechoslovakia in 1968, he continued to blame the United States for the problems of the world—but, tellingly, stopped paying his Communist party dues.

*True Believer* is both thorough and engaging. The only major caveat is that the subtitle—*Stalin's Last American Spy*—is misleading. Despite his work to assist the Soviet Union, Noel Field served as a spy for Stalin only during the last half of the 1930s. His other services to communism, from 1940 until the Unitarians fired him, were largely those of a devoted Communist trying his best to assist other Communists and betray his employer. He was hardly the last American government employee to spy for the Soviet Union; in fact, he was among the first. And he was certainly not a spy for the Americans, as alleged in the show trials in Eastern Europe. A recent book on the Dulles brothers, by *Salon* founder David Talbot, peddles the discredited

theory that Field was cynically used by Allen Dulles to sow discord among the Communists. According to this fantasy, Dulles "fed" Noel to Stalin and was actually the orchestrator of the purges. Marton, however, makes it clear that Noel Field was Stalin's willing dupe and that American intelligence had nothing to do with the Field family travails.

Many Communists were willing to sacrifice large numbers of people to create a utopian society. In a famous phrase, to make an omelet you have to break some eggs, and when they themselves were broken, many Communists were so in thrall to their ideology that they approved of their own destruction.

Few American Communists ever faced that moment of truth.

Whittaker Chambers recalled in his autobiography that, for many ex-Communists, the moment of truth was when they heard the screams of the victims in their brains. Noel Field was too enthralled to his Communist faith to hear anything. Marton accurately describes him as "delusional and devious," a man captured by a fantasy that no reality, or facts, could penetrate. Every generation has its share of such fanatics, secure in their belief that they are doing good even as they leave chaos and destruction in their wake. This portrait of a monster is an important lesson of what communism wrought. ♦



# The Bee's Needs

*When honeybees talked, one man listened.*

BY DEVORAH GOLDMAN

A group of British researchers recently discovered that they could tell the "life stories" of bees by using radar technology to track their every flight, from birth to death. This experiment draws on the work of (and would have likely delighted) Karl von Frisch, who devoted his life to understanding the inner world of bees. Emily Dickinson wrote that

*His labor is a chant,  
His idleness a tune;  
Oh, for a bee's experience  
Of clovers and of noon!*

Here, Tania Munz seeks to illuminate this "experience" by exploring the complicated life and work of Frisch.

*The Dancing Bees* is unusual in that it is a dual biography. It tells the story of Frisch, a German zoologist who learned of his Jewish ancestry well into World War II while teaching at the University of Munich. Faced with

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**The Dancing Bees**  
*Karl von Frisch and the Discovery  
of the Honeybee Language*  
by Tania Munz  
Chicago, 296 pp., \$30

the prospect of losing his livelihood—and possibly his life—Frisch managed to rally friends and colleagues to advocate on behalf of his bee research and to insist upon his devotion to the Reich. Unlike many Jewish scientists, Frisch managed to keep his position and continued to work, largely for the Nazi government, until the war's end.

But Frisch is not the main focus. Munz seems reluctant to speculate or cast judgment on his character, challenges, or personal life. Instead, the book centers on bees—as Munz calls them, Frisch's "ideal organisms." *The Dancing Bees* serves primarily as a history of the world's changing attitude toward bees, and an examination of Frisch's own perspective on his favorite insects.

Karl von Frisch never stopped wanting to know everything he could on the



*Apis mellifera*

subject. In 1946, as the world was still absorbing the impact of war, he wrote excitedly to a friend about his “sensational findings” regarding bee language: “[If] you now think I’m crazy, you’d be wrong. But I could certainly understand it.” After years of studying how bees perceived color, sensed direction, and distinguished among the scents of different flowers, he was certain he had discovered the way bees “talked” through their dances.

This decoding was the result of decades of painstaking analysis and came centuries after bee dances were first observed. As Munz points out, Aristotle had made note of their strange dance formations, and beekeepers had long wondered what they might mean. But Munz asks the book’s central question: “How . . . did von Frisch manage to observe such behaviors where others for centuries had looked but failed to see?”

The answer may reveal why Frisch was so fascinated by bees: It is possible that he saw something of himself in the single-minded, yet creative and colorful insects. In his autobiography, he explained how, as a child, he “discovered that miraculous worlds may reveal themselves to a patient observer where

the casual passer-by sees nothing at all.” And he appears never to have lost his conviction that miracles were waiting to be revealed in the world of the patient—indeed, tireless—bee.

But his conclusions changed significantly over time. In 1923, Frisch wrote that the two distinct bee dances, known as the “round dance” and “waggle dance,” communicated information about nectar or pollen sources, respectively. But by 1946, he had changed this view. He wrote and spoke widely on his carefully constructed experiments, based on many thousands of observations involving measuring the location of food sources relative to beehives in varied environments and counting the number of times bees wagged or spun around. Ultimately, he concluded that bees used their sense of direction, based on the angle of the sun, to communicate the distance and direction of food sources.

Despite repeating his experiments, he remained “unable to comprehend this ability of the bees.” Possibly more remarkable than the revelation that bees could communicate distance and direction was his discovery that they could communicate about complicated routes

or “shortcuts” as well. If bees discovered a food source after flying around a mountain, they would communicate the distance and direction of the direct route to the food rather than the circuitous route they had taken. Other bees would then fly directly to the source. But if bees had to fly up a mountain and then down a ridge to reach a food source, they would communicate the actual distance flown, the necessary distance to reach the source.

These conclusions stunned a scientific world that had moved away from viewing animals with any sense of wonder. Munz quotes a variety of early bee enthusiasts: from Charles Darwin, who declared that it is “a dull man who can examine the exquisite structure of a comb, so beautifully adapted to its end, without enthusiastic admiration,” to the 18th-century mathematician Colin Maclaurin, who wrote of the honeycomb that what “is most beautiful and regular, is also found to be most useful and excellent.” The philosopher Thomas Reid took the geometric precision of bees as proof of “the great Geometrician, who made the bee.”

By contrast, mid-20th-century American scientists trained in behaviorism, such as the biologist Adrian Wenner, were not impressed by Frisch’s findings—or by bees in general: “The discovery of [a] remarkable event among animals,” he wrote, “will find a ready acceptance in a basically optimistic audience.” But he insisted that Frisch’s interpretation of bees was anthropomorphic. Behaviorists insisted that bees were simple stimulus-response organisms, and that any attempt to decode a language based on their behavior was both fanciful and pointless.

Despite these criticisms, Frisch’s experiments were successfully repeated innumerable times, and his findings were vindicated. Munz outlines the tensions among various scientific ideologies and hints at the danger of politicizing research. She also illuminates the marvelous, seemingly random, tightly controlled world of bees, and in so doing, provides some insight into Frisch’s own character, the careful scientist creating sensations through vigilant, precise, unending work. ♦

# Lost in the Stars

*Country awaits its (musical) messiah.*

BY DAVE SHIFLETT

Many an aging hack writer (ahem) regrets not having worked harder in math class, or in what was once called “shop,” which would have equipped us for careers built on sturdier things than words. As the assignments dry up, we could, at the very least, make a few bucks selling wobbly bookcases and custom-made backscratchers (a buck extra for the left-handed model).

Yet a few of us have held out hope for another option: writing country music lyrics. We assumed that, even after decades of cranking out journalistic dreck by day, chased by brain-dissolving potions at night, we’d have enough wattage left over to dash off a few hits, or at least a couple of regional favorites. The good news is that a quick review of contemporary country strongly suggests our wattage will be ample. The bad news—well, we’ll get to that later.

There’s plenty of good country music being made—along with bluegrass and other rural-inspired genres—but what we’re talking about here is commercial country, the stuff you hear on Clear Channel and other broadcast behemoths. It should be said that commercial country is usually sung by talented vocalists backed by incredibly good musicians. But almost every song is instantly forgettable—and that’s the generous appraisal. To the late Merle Haggard, modern country was flat-out “crap.” It sounded, to his learned ear, as if it were produced by “the same band [with] the same sound.”

Put another way: There’s plenty of

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*Toby Keith (2011)*

opportunity for up-and-comers. And old, perhaps delusional, hacks.

There is definitely an abundance of what might be called negative inspiration; that is, songs that seem to have required little mental mojo, or even full consciousness, to write. Take, for instance, the mega-hit “Achy Breaky Heart,” which is quite memorable in the way that one’s first viewing of a roadside corpse tends to stick with you.

*But don't tell my heart  
My achy breaky heart  
I just don't think he'd understand  
And if you tell my heart  
My achy breaky heart  
He might blow up and kill this man*

Billy Ray Cyrus, who made a hit of the song, is also famous for siring the pop star Miley Cyrus (born Destiny Hope Cyrus), recently seen serenading her audiences while wearing a prosthetic penis. But be assured: Billy Ray

likely doesn’t care if you despise his song and his daughter. “Achy Breaky” made him rich and famous. The only dark spot—for him, at least—is that his signature song is being regularly eclipsed by newer atrocities such as “Drunk on a Plane.”

*Stewardess is somethin' sexy  
Leanin' pourin' Coke and whiskey  
Told her about my condition  
Got a little mile-high flight attention*

While easily dismissed as aural dentistry, DoaP does contain an element of genius: Sex in an airborne loo is reasonably considered a step above taking a romantic tumble in an outhouse. Ergo, “Drunk on a Plane” pushes the envelope. Merle, to be sure, was not impressed by this type of song: “They’re talking about screwing on a pickup tailgate and things of that nature. I don’t find no substance. I don’t find anything you can whistle, and nobody even attempts to write a melody.”

On the bright side, the songwriters did know how to rhyme.

*On my way home I'll bump this seat  
right up to first class  
So I can drink that cheap champagne  
out of a real glass  
And when we land I'll call her up and  
tell her "kiss my ass"*

It might take a couple of double-wides to house all the artistic hairballs coughed up by Nashville songwriters, who are easily matched by writers from other popular genres. But every once in a while comes a song whose egregiousness is truly magisterial. Cowboy hats off, then, to “Red Solo Cup,” made famous by Toby Keith.

*Now a red solo cup is the best receptacle  
For barbecues, tailgates, fairs and  
festivals  
And you sir do not have a pair of testicles  
If you prefer drinking from glass  
A red solo cup is cheap and disposable  
And in fourteen years they are  
decomposable  
And unlike my home they are not  
foreclosable  
Freddie Mac can kiss my ass woo*

At this point, news stories featuring X-rays of skulls pierced by crowbars or



railroad spikes suddenly come to mind.  
The spell holds as the song progresses.

*Red solo cup you're more than just  
plastic  
You're more than amazing you're more  
than fantastic  
And believe me that I'm not the least bit  
sarcastic  
When I look at you and say  
Red solo cup, you're not just a cup (No,  
no, God, no)  
You're my, you're my friend (Friend,  
friend, friend, life long)  
Thank you for being my friend*

In his defense, Toby Keith has been quoted as saying that this might be the dumbest song in existence, not adding whether it took one pickup truck, or two, to haul his earnings to the bank. None of which is to diminish admiration and appreciation for this or any of the aforementioned songs. After all, they give hacks hope that they, too, can have songwriting success. Some of the more delusional ones might even be inspired to pursue the hope engendered by Beverly Keel in her (Nashville) *Tennessean* column: "As the Bro Country movement begins to wane, people are anxiously awaiting an artist to appear with a fresh new sound to take country in a new direction."

Translation: The position of Country Music Messiah is open.

In this ecclesiastical spirit, I've put together (with suitable humility) a few tunes melding familiar themes—Mama, obesity, the Rapture—with contemporary developments.

*Mama got fat, daddy got even,  
He ran off and married a guy named  
Steven  
Country music might not save my soul*

Moving on a bit, the plot thickens.

*Daddy got chopped, now he's a lady  
Ran off to Texas with a girl named Sadie  
Mama's head is spinning like a top*

A good singer—perhaps, especially, one who is transitioning—might ride this tune (called "Roll Rapture") to the top of the charts. With similar reverence I submit "Seven-Dollar Beer," a piece of generational combat in the spirit of Haggard's "Okie From Muskogee."

*Well we used to go out drinking  
Had ourselves a lot of fun  
Drinking Blues and cold Budweisers  
Fifty cents for every one  
And no one gave a rat's patootie  
If your chicken was free range  
Hell, if you worried about a chicken  
People'd think that you were strange*

Both demos are available—free, of course—at my website. Which brings us to some very sobering news. Of course, the subject is money and the reality check is provided by songwriting sensation Aloe Blacc. His giant hit "Wake Me Up!" (which he co-wrote and performed) "was the most streamed song in

Spotify history and the 13th most played song on Pandora since its release in 2013," he informs us, "with more than 168 million streams in the US."

And yet, that yielded only \$12,359 in Pandora domestic royalties—which were then split among three songwriters and our publishers. In return for co-writing a major hit song, I've earned less than \$4,000 domestically from the largest digital music service.

The clear message: Dream big, including young people eyeing a future in the music biz. But think twice about cutting algebra class. ♦

BCA

# Out of Service

*A lifetime follows one summer afternoon.*

BY SCOTT DAHLIE

**M**othering Sunday begins with the phrase "Once upon a time," but in Graham Swift's newest fiction, fairy tales are not the story. They are the springboard. This slim volume pays its respects to fairy tales, and then quickly sets to growing out of them. By its second page, the novella—and what a novella it is—is sexy. Vibrant, focused, and brilliant, it is quite possibly Swift's best work yet.

On a warm March Sunday in 1924, Jane Fairchild and Paul Sheringham meet for the last time. They have been lovers, secretly, for seven years. Paul, the only child in his family to survive the Great War, is the scion of the wealthy Sheringhams of Upleigh. Jane, a foundling raised in an orphanage into a life of service, is a maid at neighboring Beechwood. This Sunday, the fourth in Lent, is Mothering Sunday, when British Christians visit their

**Mothering Sunday**  
*A Romance*  
by Graham Swift  
Knopf, 192 pp., \$22.95

baptismal churches or their nearest cathedrals, and even servants are free for the day.

Paul is irreverent, Jane is without family, and so the holiday is theirs to do with as they please. After Paul's mother and father leave to lunch with the parents of his fiancée—not Jane, of course, but a woman of their son's class—Paul drives his family's servants to the train station, and he has the house at Upleigh to himself. He admits Jane (for the first and only time) through the front door, and the lovers climb the stairs to his bedroom.

Their assignation, for all its momentousness, will be short-lived; from the bed, Jane will watch Paul take his leave of her. She will enjoy the sight of his naked body even as he conceals it away, dressing himself, bit by bit, for a luncheon with his betrothed.

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Jane does not beg Paul to stay; he does not hurry her into leaving. Instead, he tells her how to lock up, and leaves her to explore the sprawling, empty home.

Here, Swift treats us to an artful generosity between characters. In a manner that will only be fully appreciated later, each lover exchanges a gift with the other: Jane allows Paul to drive off to his own appointed fate; Paul, in leaving Jane the way he does, allows her to emerge from his bed to wander, naked and solitary, through Upleigh House—a powerful, lasting intimacy, unthinkable for a maid.

The lovers will never see each other again. Life will never return them to this glorious, and particular, place. But for Jane, this *Mothering Sunday* of 1924 will always be remembered, with gladness, as the day she ceased to live “in service.” She will remember it as the day she was unmade, the day she became free to make herself.

According to Richard Ford, freedom ranks high among a novella’s most attractive features. As a literary form, the novella can be more liberal, more generous with characters, subplots, and settings than the short story. At the same time, novellas are not held to the same expectations as the novel. Not too big, not too small, the novella is free to focus on being just right.

But this is no easy task. In *Mothering Sunday*, Swift avoids narrowness, as well as sprawl, and what gives his novella its delicious, sustained tension is its willingness to confront its ostensibly conventional stories head on: Jane *could* be adopted by the family she attends at Beechwood—war has left them childless, and already they indulge her. Likewise, she *could* persuade Paul Sheringham to marry her, not his betrothed, or forgo her diaphragm and lay some claim to Upleigh through a child. Jane faces her thoughts, and their “constant mental hazarding,” as she wanders through the home Paul has left open to her. What makes *Mothering Sunday* rich is Jane’s ability to entertain these possibilities, but not become them. What makes Jane attractive is that, once liberated, she will not let the narrative force her back into service.

Jane Fairchild’s story will outgrow Upleigh. A disaster will speed her on her way. Yet Jane will take her losses, and gains, and move forward with confidence—even joy. She will leave Beechwood for Oxford and there, as a shopgirl, not a student, come to know the dons, marry, be widowed, and keep pressing on. After the death of her first husband she will become a well-known writer; at 98, still writing at the turn of the millennium, interviewers will find her fresh, playful, beguiling. They will ask her how she came to be

a writer, and she will answer them: First, Stevenson and Haggard adventures in the Beechwood library, then Conrad’s *Youth*, which she’ll recall having finished on that Sunday evening in the spring of 1924.

Ian McEwan has called the novella prose fiction’s “beautiful daughter.” *Mothering Sunday* declares itself a romance, but it is most certainly a novella, and a beautiful one at that. In *Mothering Sunday* and Jane Fairchild, Swift personifies the form and has written British fiction a love letter. ♦

B&A

# The Gibson Quandary

*Good work from a bad man raises certain dilemmas.*

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

I watched *Blood Father*—a tough, smart, violent little movie available on demand—on my iPad this past weekend. It works as a companion piece to *Hell or High Water*, the riveting bank-robber flick that many people think is the movie of the year so far, only instead of being set in hardscrabble Texas, this one is set in white-trash California. It’s about a sixtyish ex-con tattoo artist who’s managed to stay on the straight and narrow until his estranged teenage daughter shows up. She’s run afoul of a drug cartel and needs his help to stay alive.

I’d recommend it unreservedly for those who like this kind of *Breaking Bad* fare but for one thing: Its star is Mel Gibson. People who’ve been watching movies for the past 30 years will not be surprised that Gibson is the best thing in the movie, since he’s usually the best thing in every movie he’s ever been in. What’s more, when he’s behind the camera, his direction is the best thing in the movies he makes. Gibson is a remarkably tal-

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## Blood Father

Directed by Jean-François Richet



ented man. But people who’ve been following the news for the past decade also know he’s a genuinely disgusting human being—a basket of deplorables in and of himself, and likely irredeemably so.

He’s been exposed as an abuser of women. Gibson once told his ex-girlfriend, who claimed he broke her jaw while she was holding their infant daughter, that she deserved “a bat in the side of [her] head.” She also caught him on tape saying “you look like a f—ing b—h in heat and if you get raped by a pack of n—ers, it will be your fault.” And of course, he’s one of the most openly rancid antisemites in America. When stopped by a police officer in 2006 for drunk driving, he started muttering about “f—ing Jews” and saying “the Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world.” He once referred to Jews as “oven dodgers” after Winona Ryder (a Jew) objected to an antigay joke he made in her presence.

Just this month he told Glenn Beck that “some Jewish people—I guess some rabbis or something” had stolen a copy of his movie *The Passion of the Christ* before it was released, and blackened his name.

Gibson did, indeed, find himself awash in controversy over the film’s questionable portrayal of the Jewish role in the crucifixion—it was the subject of complaint from the Anti-Defamation League—but the movie was a colossal hit and Gibson made \$350 million from it, the largest haul anyone in history has ever taken away from a single motion picture. It wasn’t until the story about Gibson ranting about Jews to the Malibu police officer two years later that he truly reaped the antisemite’s whirlwind. The fact that Gibson continues to blame his own ruined reputation on Jewish thievery rather than his own loathsome conduct is a mark of what an awful person he is.

So, what to do? Does one see Mel Gibson movies or avoid them? It’s a classic dilemma, made all the more complicated by the fact that, if you buy a ticket or download a film, some fraction of the proceeds will end up flowing to Gibson. That will be true as well in November when his first directorial effort in 10 years, *Hacksaw Ridge*, is released—the true story of a World War II medic who was also a conscientious objector and won a Medal of Honor. It’s a great story, and he’s really quite a brilliant director, Gibson is, as his work on the Oscar-winning *Braveheart* demonstrated—and even more so on his breathtaking *Apocalypto*, made after *The Passion of the Christ*, a pre-Columbian chase story about a man trying to evade a band of cannibals hunting him down. But can you bear to give him your custom for a film of pacific uplift in the midst of war?

If you cannot bear to look at Gibson’s face, or consider Gibson’s work because of what he’s said and done, your refusal to do so is unimpeachable. It’s an emotional as well as intellectual response to the unforgivable and is both valid and worthy. But what of those of us who know full well that he’s despicable and yet (as the fact that I saw *Blood Father* attests) can still bring ourselves to



Erin Moriarty, Mel Gibson

watch him or see the films he directs?

The easiest case to make is that morally questionable people have created art from the dawn of time. Caravaggio was likely a murderer. Stendhal was a plagiarist. Can’t we still see the beauty in a Caravaggio even if we know of the bestiality of Caravaggio? Can’t we lose ourselves in Stendhal’s endless layers of irony even though we know he was a word thief?

The answer to these questions is obviously yes, but they don’t quite address this situation. What these bad men produced was art that transcended them. Gibson is not Caravaggio, nor is he Stendhal. He is a glamorous and exciting film actor and a terrific director, but nothing he’s done or made is a necessary work that has changed aesthetic history or contributed to the advance of Western civilization. So I’m not sure we get a pass using this argument.

I think the best case—or my only case—is that I don’t really care what Mel Gibson thinks or what he does. His noxious views and behavior are notably private. (I don’t accept the contention that *The Passion of the Christ* is prima facie antisemitic, though of course one is obliged to consider that an antisemite cowrote and directed it.) Moreover, if I really

did allow my moral disapproval of the views of actors and directors to guide my moviegoing selections, I’d also have to boycott the films of Mark Ruffalo and Marion Cotillard, both of whom are 9/11 truthers. And I loved both *You Can Count on Me* (Ruffalo) and *The Dark Knight Rises* (Cotillard). And so many others.

What’s more, Gibson has paid a huge price. He is no longer on the Hollywood A-list, and that’s entirely due to the fact that Hollywood can’t be sure he won’t open his mouth on a publicity tour for a new movie and, with a stray word, destroy the financial future of a \$150 million project. If he hadn’t been such a grievous jerk, he could have had a career to rival Tom Hanks’s. But he is, and he doesn’t. So now he does movies like *Blood Father*. He doesn’t need to: He’s worth an estimated \$425 million. But he’s an actor and he wants to act. So he does.

More important, since he’s an actor, he wants to be loved. And his greatest punishment is that he never will be loved again. No download I make of a Gibson movie, no ticket I buy to a Gibson movie, is going to change that, and in its own way, that’s a pretty severe and deserved punishment. ♦



**"Microaggressions ... are comments, snubs or insults that communicate derogatory or negative messages that might not be intended to cause harm but are targeted at people based on their membership in a marginalized group."**

**—New York Times, September 6, 2016**

**PARODY**

### STUDENT ORIENTATION HANDOUT #3 FORMS OF AGGRESSION

**MICROAGGRESSION:** Social interaction that unintentionally causes harm through the targeting of a Marginalized Person or group.

*Example:* "You don't act like a gay dude."

*Explanation:* Implies that LGBTQ people share certain behavioral traits. Assumes gender identity.

**NANOAGGRESSION:** Social interaction that unintentionally causes harm through cultural appropriation.

*Example:* Setting off fireworks.

*Explanation:* Historians generally agree that gunpowder is a Chinese invention; its use by persons of non-Chinese ancestry is a form of imperialist confiscation.

**PICOAGGRESSION:** Social interaction that may or may not cause harm through an effort to be of service and does not target a Marginalized Person or group.

*Example:* Helping a height-challenged person reach an object on a high shelf.

*Explanation:* Implies that short people can't use stools.

**FEMTOAGGRESSION:** Social interaction that may or may not cause harm and is intended to communicate a positive message.

*Example:* "Wow, love your shirt!"

*Explanation:* Not everyone appreciates social interaction. Of those who do, not all are comfortable with or skilled in receiving compliments. Of those who are, not all place value on personal adornment and may be wearing clothing simply to conform to social conventions and applicable ordinances concerning public nudity. Of those who do place value on personal adornment, not all may feel the particular shirt they are wearing merits being singled out for praise.

**ATTOAGGRESSION:** Social interaction that displays concern for another's well-being.

*Example:* Performing the Heimlich maneuver.

*Explanation:* Denies the agency of the person who is choking to death. Invades personal space. Entails physical contact without explicit verbal consent.

**ZEPTOAGGRESSION:** Social interaction that produces a marked increase in well-being for a large number of Marginalized Persons.

*Example:* Using military force to stop genocide.

*Explanation:* When performed by a NATO member, reinforces stereotype of Western "saviors" "rescuing" indigenous peoples from oppression.

**YOCTOAGGRESSION:** Social interaction that produces a marked increase in well-being for the entire human race.

*Example:* Eradicating smallpox.

*Explanation:* Epitomizes humanist arrogance; otherizes viruses; reinforces teleological logocentrism, the "scientific method," and other tools of oppression; marginalizes Gaia-centered belief systems.